Department of Political and Social Sciences

Democratic Innovation through Ideas? Participatory Budgeting and Frames of Citizen Participation in France, Germany and Great Britain

Anja Röcke

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to obtaining the degree of
Doctor of Political and Social Sciences of the European University Institute

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Abstract

This research investigates the processes of adaptation of participatory budget (PB) institutions to France, Germany, and Great Britain in relation to frames of citizen participation, for instance 'participatory' democracy or 'community empowerment'. I define frames as relatively coherent but flexible idea combinations that contain cognitive and normative assumptions about the issue at stake (in the present case citizen participation). The process of PB, developed in Porto Alegre, Brazil, includes ordinary citizens in the allocation of public funds and thereby breaks with a traditional approach to democracy. Various actors and actor networks have imported it into Europe since around 10 years, where it belongs to the most interesting participatory instruments. But how far-reaching are the results of PB in Europe?

Central questions of the research, a comparative case study of three PB processes investigated with qualitative methods, concern the relation between frames of citizen participation and PB institutions, the degree of procedural and political innovation of PB, and the similarities and differences between frames of citizen participation in Germany, France, and Great Britain today. I argue that frames, of which the national and cross-country diffusion is strongly related to the activities of single policy entrepreneurs and networks, are never simply 'put into practice', but are adapted to the respective institutional setting and interpreted or re-interpreted in line with contextual features and the changing political interests and normative perspectives of the organising actors. Whereas new frames are in the beginning promoted by a small group of people, they might develop into more widely shared assumptions about the conduct of public policies, i.e. become a new *référentiel* of public policies.

The three cases of PB analysed show distinct results in relation to the degree of innovation, which is influenced by different intervening factors (namely the frame of citizen participation, political and administrative support), as well as by the pace of the procedural development. Once implemented, a PB process may produce unexpected results, which in some cases become even more important than the initial goals. One hypothesis that emerges from this study is indeed that despite the political focus of many organisers, PB processes might contribute primarily to the introduction of a user-oriented administration rather than a 'democratisation of democracy'. With regard to the frames of citizen participation in France, Germany, and Great Britain today, the current situation is characterised by more differences than similarities. Although all frames considered here share an overall criticism with regard to a 'pure' model of representative democracy, their particular focus differs (e.g. devolution of power to local citizens and communities without modifying the centres of power; participation in terms of top-down consultative devices or as a second, equally legitimate basis of democracy next to the vote for representatives). These differences, as well as diverse PB and other participatory practices, reflect different political traditions in Europe as well as distinct scenarios with regard to the future development of the democratic order.

Acknowledgements

Table of contents

X

List of figures

List of tables

INTRODUCTION

"And those of us who manage the public's dollars will be held to account, to spend wisely, reform bad habits, and do our business in the light of day, because only then can we restore the vital trust between a people and their government."[1]

"Un mot est toujours indissolublement une idée creuse et une idée à creuser. Il ne prend son sens que dans la lecture et dans l'action."[2]

I. Setting the scene: the research problématique

This research investigates the processes of diffusion, adoption and adaptation of participatory budget institutions in France, Germany, and Great Britain in relation to 'frames' of citizen participation. I define frames as relatively coherent, but flexible idea combination that change over time and across space. The starting point of the present investigation was the observation that distinct terms ('frames') related to citizen participation exist in different national contexts, for instance the 'citizens' commune' in Germany and 'participatory democracy' in France. They appeared to be dominant notions in the sense that people working in the domain of citizen participation or other people interested in civic engagement would often, directly or indirectly, refer to them in public speeches and publications. This observation led to a theoretical-conceptual and several empirical questions. The theoretical-conceptual questioning involved the definition of these notions: what 'are' they? Do they represent a 'discourse', an 'ideology', a 'frame', or something else? The empirical questions were the

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[1] Barack Obama, Inauguration speech, 2009.
[2] Pierre Rosanvallon, "L'autogestion", 1976.

following: Are these concepts only different because of different languages spoken, or do they express certain particular features of the national political context? Who created these notions, and how did they become dominant? What are the similarities and differences across countries? Do they influence the adaptation of participatory budgeting institutions, and if yes how?

Generally speaking, participatory budgeting (PB) is an institutionalised procedure of citizen participation involving ordinary citizens in the spending of public funds. Members of the radical left wing Workers' Party together with civil society[3] activists invented this process at the end of the 1980s in the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil, where it has led to far-reaching results in terms of political mobilisation, redistributive justice and a more efficient public administration (e.g. Abers 2000; Gret, Sintomer 2005). This created an international 'hype' among people working about democratic reforms and international development and initiated a broad movement of ideational and procedural diffusion from Porto Alegre to other parts of the world. Participatory budgeting has for several years been promoted by actors with diverse ideological and organisational backgrounds, e.g. alter-globalisation and left-party activists, the British government and the World Bank (Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b).

The participation of citizens to the *arcanae* of (municipal) politics, the budget, constitutes a difference with regard to traditional forms of institutionalised local citizen participation, which usually foresee a purely consultative role for ordinary citizens. Moreover, it represents a break with the very idea of representative democracy, conveying citizens with the right to select their representatives, but not to directly influence or even to take decisions about the conduct of public affairs. This study therefore investigates the domain of participatory processes that seek to go beyond the existing canon of representative democracy. During the last two decades, such procedures have considerably spread in many Western democracies (and beyond). They are part of (and have led to) a renewed practical and theoretical interest in more participatory forms of 'governance' (e.g. Melo, Baiocchi 2006).[4]

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[3] In the tradition of Tocqueville, 'civil society' describes the sphere that lies beyond the state and the market.
[4] The idea of 'participatory governance' implies that citizens become legitimate actors in the decision-making process. The theme of governance (which is supposed to represent less authoritarian and bureaucratic forms of steering than traditional government) seems to have replaced that of neo-corporatism. Whereas the latter underlines the central role of the State in public-private partnerships, theories of governance generally attach considerable importance to the role of private enterprises in these new forms of steering. With regard to different types of governance ('corporate governance', 'good governance', 'governance as minimal state' etc.) see for instance (Grote, Gbikpi 2002).

More specifically, this work deals with the implementation of participatory budget institutions[5] in three European countries – one case in France, one in Germany and one in Great Britain – and therefore focuses on the processes of adaptation of a foreign institution to a new host culture and of its diffusion from one place to another. How is a process with very particular roots and procedural rules implemented in a completely different context, and to what extent is this related to its path of diffusion, the involved 'diffusion actors' and the local and national political context of the new host culture? Are the European models also innovative in the sense of going beyond more traditional forms of participation, where citizens usually have only a consultative voice or decide about micro-local concerns? Whereas these questions need to be analysed in detail (for an overview see Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b), the development in Europe so far shows that the very idea of a 'participatory budget' is a highly contested affair. It is linked to power conflicts and debates about the respective scope and importance of participatory procedures within or beyond the institutional framework of representative democracy.

These debates and conflicts take place and take a particular shape within different political-institutional contexts. The contexts differ, for instance, with regard to the particular state-civil society relationship, the institutional/legal framework and distinct frames of citizen participation. The selection of cases in three countries underlines the comparative intention and nature of this work, which aims at investigating the dynamics of process adaptation in different settings. In all cases, this adaptation of participatory budgeting is the result of a voluntary decision and not of a legally prescribed implementation like, for instance, the obligatory introduction of EU laws in EU member countries. Moreover, this adaptation is the result of a horizontal (and complex) diffusion process, linked to individual transfers or collective forms of diffusion through networks and media, and not of a top-down implementation (Dolowitz, Marsh 2000). It is therefore of crucial importance to consider the actors who decide to promote or set up a participatory budgeting process, as well as those who will implement it.[6] What is their political background,[7] what goals do they pursue with

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[5] 'Institution' is here used in the general sense of a process and does not relate to the political science literature about Institutionalism.

[6] The role of 'interpreting actors' has also been underlined in the framework of the obligatory implementation of new rules or laws (e.g. Klages 2009). The present research does *not* focus on the perspectives of the participants of PB meetings.

[7] To link particular ideas with the personal background of actors is certainly not a new idea, but has already been theorised by 'classic' authors like Karl Marx, Karl Mannheim and Max Scheler. In this work, I did not consider the social origin of actors involved in participatory budgeting processes, but focused on their political and ideological background.

the diffusion and implementation of PB, and in how far do they adapt this new procedural idea to the context and with regard to existing, or new, frames of citizen participation?

The conceptual framework of the present study does not only involve 'agency' (the role of actors and networks), but also 'structure' (political-institutional context). What is the importance of the political context on the implementation of participatory budget institutions, both in terms of institutional constraints (existing participatory practices, power constellations, scope of action, legal framework, etc.) and of existing normative perspectives or frames of citizen participation? I conceive the relation between actors, context, frames of citizen participation and PB institutions as dynamic and interdependent, which can be presented in form of the following figure.

Figure 1: Relation between actors, context, frames of citizen participation and PB institutions

FRAME OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Existing ideas, traditions, concepts of participation

Importation, use, definition

ACTORS ⟷ **CONTEXT**
(local, national)

Power position, political coalitions

Implemen-tation

PB INSTITUTION   Legal framework; existing participatory processes and other institutions
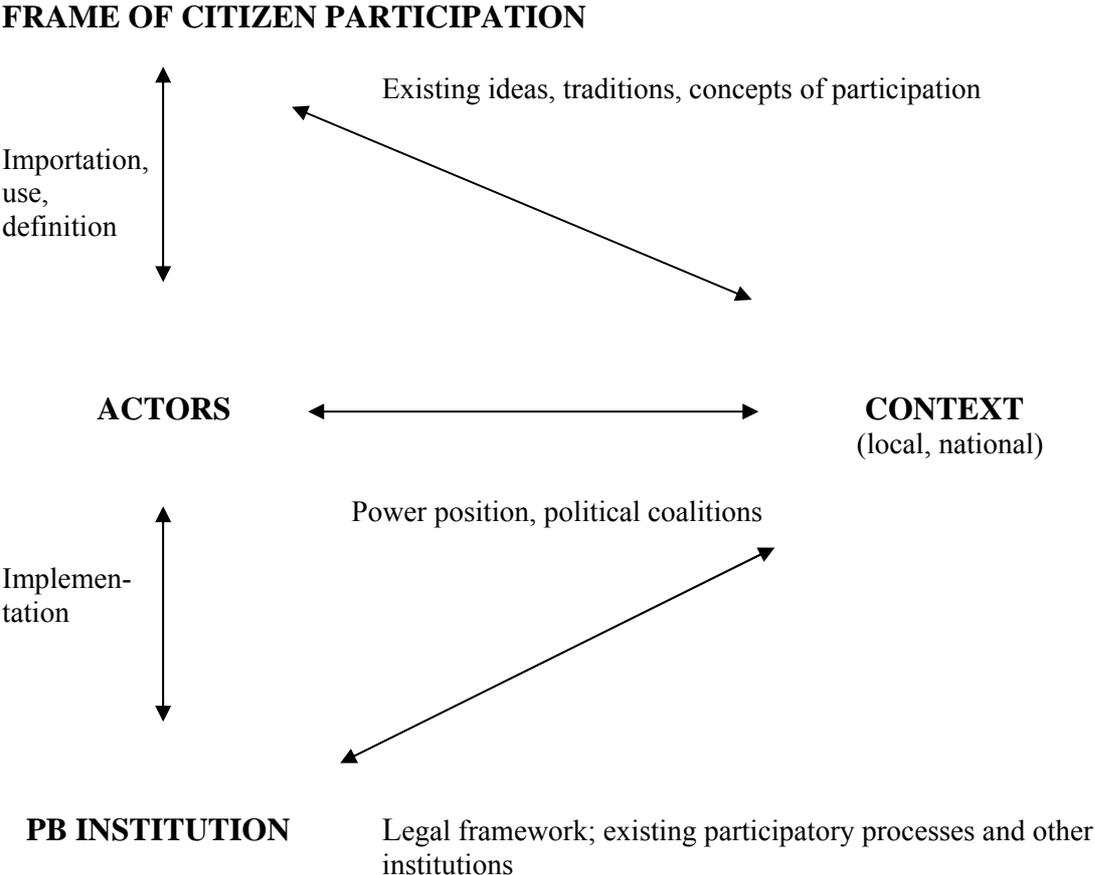
This figure specifies the three units of analysis that will be investigated in the empirical chapters: the actors involved with the implementation and diffusion of PB, the process of PB, and the frames of citizen participation. The (local, national) context comes into play at these

three levels (in the social reality it is of course related to much more aspects): existing ideas, traditions and concepts of participation ('frame'); political constellations and power positions of involved actors ('PB actors'); and the legal framework and existing institutions ('PB institutions).

PB institutions and frames of citizen participation are related to each through social actors. A policy actor tries, for instance, to implement his/her perspectives on (or frame of) citizen participation with a new participatory instrument, or to redefine the existing frames of citizen participation in relation to concrete policy developments. This is the reason why the arrows point into both directions, top-down and bottom-up. Moreover, actors design a new institution with regard to existing participatory processes and in the framework of the political and institutional possibilities of action.

Generally speaking, I assume that actors are neither completely free in their behaviour and decisions, nor totally subjugated under contextual constraints and/or incorporated patterns of perception (their 'habitus').[8] In other words:

> "Social action originates in human agency of clever, creative human beings but in a context of social structures of various sorts that both enable and constrain their agency. (…) [S]ociety is reproduced in this process of interaction between agents and structures that constantly adjusts, transforms, resists, or reinvents social arrangements" (Hajer 1995: 98).

For the purpose of the present study, it is not necessary to deal in more detail with the fundamental question in the social sciences about the respective role and importance of 'agency' and 'structure'. It is sufficient to contend that social actors act within a certain context that constrains action, but that does also change due to actors' political, economic, social and cultural activities, discourses and interpretations.

The main theoretical and conceptual discussion guiding this research deals with the concepts of frame (e.g. Benford, Snow 2000; Campbell 2002) and of *référentiel* (e.g. Jobert 1995;

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[8] The 'sociology of critique' (or 'pragmatic sociology'), as the approach developed by Boltanksi, Thévenot (2006; original 1991) and other French scholars is sometimes called, offers an alternative to, and critique of, Pierre Bourdieu's 'critical sociology', where social actors act mainly unconsciously following their incorporated worldviews (*habitus*) and were social relations are highly influenced by power relations (Bourdieu 1980; for a comparison Bénatouil 1999). Boltanski and Thévenot (2006) underline instead the critical capacities of social actors in situations of conflict and justification, in the sense that they are not constraint to select a particular justificatory principle but can act following their interpretation of the situation.

Muller 2000), although some other 'ideational' approaches are also mentioned (discourse, ideology, polity). These considerations bring together different streams of sociological and political science literature and are part of the difficult undertaking of approaching ideas. More specifically, this work deals with certain terms or notions and their multiple definitions (as well as their role in the policy practice). Elisabeth Frazer has also dealt with the problem of 'defining terms', and the following passage of her book about communitarianism (1999) is worthy of extended quotation:

> "Yet the idea of definition continues to grip social theorists and scientists in an odd way. A number of papers on the subject of community, for instance, take something like the following form. They ask whether it is possible to come up with or arrive at a 'definition' of 'community'; they survey the extant literature both theoretical and empirical, descriptive and normative; they list fifty-six ways 'community' is defined in this literature; they argue that these various definitions don't 'boil down' or 'add up' to a definitive solution. They conclude either with a 'core concept' or working definition which (...) tends to be so formal and abstract as to be empirically vacuous; or they conclude that the concept community is hopelessly vague or non-existent" (Frazer 1999: 54).

Following these observations, it appears impossible, at least from a sociological perspective, to elaborate 'the' definition of a term, as there does not exist the 'only valid' one. This is why I do not intend to deliver this sort of essential definitions, but want to discuss and analyse the existence of different approaches (of which some might be more influential than others).[9] The concepts of frame and of *référentiel* precisely allow the analyst to focus on the actors that create and diffuse such concepts, as well as on different co-existing definitions and approaches.

In addition to these conceptual and theoretical considerations, this research addresses a series of empirical questions, which are related to the three main dimensions of this work. The first one concerns the frames of citizen participation (origins, meaning, diffusion) and is therefore situated at the level of ideas in the sense of conceptions of citizen participation in Europe today. The second one deals with the processes of implementation of participatory budget institutions, which includes different intervening factors (frames of citizen participation, 'PB actors', patterns of the political context, etc.). The third one investigates the process of participatory budgeting with regard to its functioning and procedural shape, by paying particular attention to the question of its degree of 'innovation'. All three dimensions are

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[9] Another possible way to deal with the infinite empirical variety is to establish ideal types.

situated within a comparative framework, which does necessarily involve the question of differences and similarities across cases.

The guiding empirical question of this study is the following: What are current frames of citizen participation in France, Germany, and Great Britain today and how are they related to the processes of adoption and of adaptation of participatory budgeting institutions to new political contexts? More specifically, the analysis involves questions linked to each of the three thematic blocks just mentioned:

1) Frames of citizen participation

- Who is creating frames, how do they diffuse and become dominant?
- To what extent, if at all, do dominant or 'master' frames of citizen participation represent or express certain features of the national political context?
- What are similarities and differences across countries?

2) Implementation of participatory budgeting processes

- Do frames of citizen participation influence the implementation and functioning of participatory budgeting institutions, and if yes how? What are other important intervening factors?
- Despite the differences in the adaptation of participatory budget institutions across different national settings, is it also possible to distinguish some striking similarities?

3) Participatory budgeting

- Are participatory budgets in France, Germany, and the UK innovative in the sense of a process that increases the influence of citizens in the making of public policies?[10]
- In how far does the degree of innovation of a participatory budgeting process in Europe depend on the importation of a new frame of citizen participation, or on the re-definition of an existing one? Put differently: in how far is democratic innovation linked to new ideas on citizen participation?)

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[10] In this work, the criteria for assessing the degree of innovation are the following: the degree of power of citizens in the process (impact on 'rules of the game' and the management of the process; decision-making competence or consultation); the level of the process (micro-local or broader); the use of specific measures of participation (door-to-door contact, random selection, etc.); and the thematic scope of influence of participant (large or restricted).

Before I pursue this introduction by presenting the involved fields of literature and the methodological framework (including case selection), let me first lay out the broader normative, political and pragmatic concerns that motivate the present work. Why did I spend four years studying participatory budget institutions and frames of citizen participation? The first reason is of a pragmatic nature. Already before starting the Ph.D. project, I worked within a European, comparative study of PB (Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008a,b). It therefore appeared quite obvious using the broad set of empirical material for developing my own project. The dimension of ideas related to participatory budget institutions, i.e. what I labelled and defined in terms of 'frames of citizen participation', appeared as an interesting possibility for developping this specific approach to the topic. It involves an investigation into the procedural mechanisms of participatory budgeting, of the actors related to their implementation and the diffusion and interpretation of participatory frames, but involves also a theoretical discussion of different political science concepts related to studying the role of ideas.

With regard to the normative and political assumptions about citizen participation that underlie the present study, they can be presented as a mix of normative and realist perspectives. Overall, I am convinced of the positive impact participatory processes can have for realising a more just and equal political order. At the same time, not any process of citizen participation potentially produces this kind of positive outcome. Poorly organised procedures, for instance, can even provoke an increase of political apathy or cynicism on the part of citizens who engage with such practices, because their engagement remains without influence. Moreover, it is important to take into account and tackle existing problems of participatory devices, most notably the middle-class bias of many instruments.

Finally, not all decisions in all contexts and circumstances need a full-blown participatory process. In some cases, the current institutional framework of regular elections, an independent public opinion, and the public justification of decisions taken autonomously by elected representatives (Manin 1996) might be just good enough or sufficient for dealing with the issue at stake. At the same time, the acute legitimacy crisis of Western democracies, characterised amongst others things by a continuous reduction in voter participation and the rise of extreme right and populist parties, proves that this framework *alone* no longer suffices. A more courageous modification of existing institutional arrangements is needed, one that does not intend to overthrow the present representative order, but to increase the possibilities

for citizens to participate in and to control public decisions, as well as to increase the transparency of the decision-making process and the accountability of politicians. In a nutshell, I think that "the vision of a responsive and just government run by elites for the benefit of citizens is as utopian as full-blown participatory democracy", but that it is important to experiment much more with "combined representative and participatory mechanisms in hybrid configurations" (Fung 2006: 670). The role of the social sciences in this regard is to carefully analyse existing processes in order to make clear the potentials and possible drawbacks of participatory institutions, as well as to keep alive and contribute to the democratic imagination about our political order. To investigate the goals of a participatory process, the frames of citizen participation actors use in order to present and justify a participatory process and their influence on the participatory practice provides an original point of departure and of analysis. One of the hypotheses that emerges from this particular focus is that despite the (political) frames that guide the implementation of participatory budgeting, they might contriubute to the introduction of a user-oriented administration rather than a 'democratisation of democracy'. The reasons are both structural (the problems of institutional, i.e. top-down participatory projects to mobilise citizens) and procedural (limited influence of citizens on 'rules of the game') and are linked moreover to the pace of development once the process is implemented.

II. Involved fields of research and contribution to literature

This study belongs to the broad and heterogeneous field of studies about citizen participation and 'participatory governance'. Yet, this label does not designate a precise field of research, but cuts into diverse research traditions and involves different methodological and theoretical approaches. Broadly speaking, the attention paid in this work towards the different processes of adaptation and implementation of participatory budgeting processes in France, Germany, and Great Britain shows similarities with a research programme presented recently in an edited volume about "participatory cultures and practices" (Neveu 2007). Here, as there, the focus lies on a "careful consideration of the precise modalities" (ibid: 16-17) of the introduction of new participatory discourses and practices, i.e. on the "processes of appropriation and of construction of the political in different contexts" (ibid: 18). Yet, it adds

to this programme a deliberate comparative focus as well as the question of the (cross-) national diffusion of participatory practices.

Different, more specific fields of research have been considered in this study. This is, first, the literature about participatory budgeting, which will be presented in more detail in chapter 2. Whereas the Porto Alegre model has been analysed a great deal (Abers 2000; Baiocchi 2005; Gret, Sintomer 2005; etc.), the investigation of European examples is more recent (e.g. Herzberg 2008; Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b; Talpin 2007).[11] Many analyses of European cases deal with the concrete process outcomes or focus on certain theoretical questions. They do not focus, or do so only to a certain degree and from a different perspective, on the role of frames of citizen participation and the 'diffusion – and implementation actors' of participatory budgeting. The comparative focus on frames of citizen participation and their role in the implementation process of a novel institution like PB adds a novel perspective to this literature.[12]

Second, the analysis of the creation, diffusion and implementation of frames of citizen participation contributes to the literature about normative models that orient the policy making process. Werner Jann (2002), for instance, in the conclusion of an investigation about German models [*Leitbilder*] of public administration,[13] formulates a series of questions, to which I will provide some theoretical and empirical answers:

> "A decisive problem is where these models [*Leitbilder*] and discourses come from, who possibly 'makes' them, if they are (can be) steered intentionally or if they develop and diffuse in a largely autonomous dynamic [*eigendynamisch*]? This is linked to the question of the role of public administration studies and of the social sciences more generally as suppliers [*Lieferanten*] of knowledge, ideas and ideologies. It has to be asked moreover who uses these models how, what role

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[11] In Switzerland, some forms of participation around budget could be considered as PB processes, but are not at all linked to the Porto Alegre experiment (Feld, Kirchgässner 2001).

[12] Whereas Sintomer (2001) does not focus on the role of frames in the *implementation* of new institutions, his research follows a similar interest in analysing normative conceptions of public policies. He works, however, with the concept of *cité* developed by Boltanski and Thévenot (2006). Also Gilcher-Holtey (2005) has carried out a similar type of study about the 68-movement, where she focuses on the processes of idea diffusion, of their confrontation with a new context and their appropriation by new actors. My study, however, also involves the dimension of 'idea-packages' or frames of citizen participation instead of single ideas and investigates the role of these frames in the process of institutional implementation of PB institutions.

[13] His definition comes close to what is considered as a *référentiel* in the present study (chapter 1). The 'Leitbild' approach does not consider the difference between concepts created by actors and those by researchers. Jann (2002: 280-81) defines a *Leitbild* as a normative framework that includes a specification of the most relevant actors, objects and goals of public policies, as well as cause- and effect relations (normative and cognitive assumptions).

they play in the tactic and strategic calculations of actors; and finally, what their effects are?" (Jann 2002: 301).[14]

In addition to these aspects, the comparative nature of this work introduces a further aspect with regard to normative models of public policies, namely their cross-national differences and similarities. Even though this aspect cannot be dealt with in much detail, it contributes to a young field of research that investigates current ideological 'universes' about citizen participation in Europe (Herzberg 2008; Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b: 217sq).

Third, this study engages a theoretical discussion about concepts for studying the role of ideas. It discusses the notion of *référentiel* ('frame of reference'), a concept and approach developed by French political scientists, and compares it to the frame concept. It reviews different streams of the literature about the frame concept (namely parts of the public policy and social movement literature) and develops a new definition, which might be of interest for other scholars dealing with the role of ideas in political processes and public policies.

III. Outline of the thesis

The thesis contains three parts. **Part one** provides an overview of the basic concepts, related fields of literature and methods that guide the present study. It starts with a theoretical discussion about the concepts of frame and *référentiel* (chapter 1). Frames are defined as concepts or terms that are created and used by social actors and change their meaning over time. They can become widespread notions ('master frames'), which subsume different interpretations. The creation or emergence of frames is linked to the social, political, cultural and economic conditions of the surrounding context. The *référentiel* approach is more encompassing than the notion of frame in that it adds the power position and identity of actors to the prevalence of certain perspectives or ideas. The actors of a policy sector construct their identity on the basis of the valid *référentiel*, which also informs the selection of policy instruments and the overall policy approach.

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[14] I translated all non-English original texts into English in order to make the text more fluent. Mistakes related to these translations are my own responsibility.

Chapter 2 introduces the broad empirical and theoretical field of citizen participation (sometimes refered to in terms of 'participatory governance'). It starts with a presentation of the global spread of participatory devices and the contextual conditions of this development. Thereafter, it provides a picture of some theoretical discussions from the literature about citizen participation that have accompanied, provoked or resulted from the diffusion of new democratic institutions and eventually reviews the literature about participatory budgeting in more detail. Chapter 3 provides the methodological framework. It lays out the reasons and implications of carrying out a comparative and qualitative case study in three European countries. It also presents the selection of cases (local and national).

Part two introduces in more detail the object of research, participatory budgeting, and investigates its importation and adaptation in three national contexts: France, Germany, and Great Britain. The analysis starts with a chapter that discusses the notions of diffusion and of transfer, presents the Porto Alegre model and provides an overview about the adoption and adaptation of participatory budgeting in Europe (chapter 4). Chapters 5 to 7 develop these considerations further by focussing on the situation in France, Germany, and the UK. Every chapter contains a particular 'story', but deals with a similar set of questions.

In France (chapter 5), there has been a shift of the master frame of citizen participation over the last years: from proximity and proximity democracy, which dominated public debates around the new millennium, to participatory democracy that is today the 'catch word' used quasi-synonymously with citizen participation. I will argue that this frame transformation represents mainly a discursive change and not a change of the practice and goals of public policies. It is the notion of proximity that forms a *référentiel* of public policies. Its emergence over the 1990s expresses the inclination of the traditional, Republican conception of the state-civil society relationship towards a greater valorisation of society with regard to the state. This perspective on recent frame shifts in France allows also to better understand the development and practice of participatory budget institutions in the Hexagon. Whilst the Porto Alegre model played an important role for the importation of the idea of participatory democracy to French public debates, I argue that this term is most often either defined in terms of a proximity democracy (information, consultation, listening, etc.) by the organisers, or remains at the level of a label without impacting the policy practice. This is the reason why many (most?) of participatory budgeting processes in France do not fundamentally differ from

existing traditional processes of citizen participation, at least with regard to the procedural powers (impact on rules, on process design, on decisions) citizens have.

In Germany, (chapter 6), the master frame of citizen participation is the citizens' commune. It delineates a heterogeneous ideological configuration, which is the result of "frame bridging" (Benford, Snow 2000) between the New Public Management agenda and diverse more 'participatory' orientations, such as communitarianism, "cooperative democracy" and the ideal of a municipal self-government based on an active citizenship. Like the proximity approach in France, the citizens' commune can be considered not only as frame of citizen participation, but also as nucleus of a new *référentiel* of local public administration. The emergence of the citizens' commune is related to the introduction of the New Public Management reform agenda in Germany, as well as to a considerable spread of participatory instruments during the 1990s. The process of participatory budgeting was introduced by one of the persons who invented the citizens' commune concept, who is and has been actively involved in expert networks linked to the introduction of the New Public Management agenda. In the beginning, participatory budgeting was mainly considered as tool for a more user-oriented administration. The importation of the Porto Alegre reference several years later has linked it to a more political agenda. Still today, however, many processes do not go beyond a simple consultation of citizens and confer citizens with limited procedural powers.

With regard to recent policy documents, the UK (chapter 7) appears today as a 'promised land' for citizen participation. Various national organisations and government departments underline the need for a greater citizen engagement and the empowerment of local communities. Finally, former Community Secretary Hazel Blears has developed a 'National Strategy' for implementing participatory budget procedures in all English municipalities by 2012. The UK is today the *only* place in Europe where a member of government effectively supports PB at the national level and where its use is already considered in certain government departments. The centralist imposition of the empowerment agenda to local authorities, however, sheds light on the ambivalent policy framework. Moreover, the political context is characterised by myriad public-private partnership boards dealing at different levels, and often far from democratic control, with the management and delivery of public services. What is the potential role of a process like participatory budgeting in this context, considering the fact that it represents in most places a form of micro-local grant funding over quite limited funds? What is in this regard the role of one of the community frame of former

Secretary of State Hazel Blears (and others), aiming at a devolution of power down to citizens without changing the monopole of elected representatives about the strategic questions?

Part three breaks the analysis down to the local level. It contains a detailed analysis of three cases of participatory budgeting and investigates the factors that have influenced their set up (frames of citizen participation and others), the involved actors as well as their results and degree of 'innovation'.

The 'High school participatory budget' (chapter 8) represents a case in which the organisers of the participatory budgeting have aimed to 'put into practice' a frame of citizen participation, namely participatory democracy, and managed indeed to set up an original process that constitutes an exceptional case in the French context. Moreover, the procedure has provoked a profound modernisation of the department dealing with high schools, although the initial and present impetus has been clearly political. The most important reason for understanding this exceptional case is the frame of citizen participation that guided the implementation of the procedure (participatory democracy), the power position of the regional President (S. Royal), the support of two leading actors in the regional administration, and the specific pace of procedural development. I put forward the hypothesis that participatory democracy has turned from a frame of citizen participation into the *référentiel* of the regional administration in form of a developed form user-orientation. At the same time, the political results of the participatory budgeting procedure remain behind the expectations of the organisers and are also limited with regard to the criteria of (political-procedural) innovation developed here.

The participatory budgeting process in one area of the city of Salford (chapter 9) represents an opposite configuration with regard to the French case. There was no official frame of citizen participation, and the idea of implementing a participatory budgeting process was brought on the political agenda via civil society activists (and not politicians). Inspired by the Porto Alegre process, a local non-governmental organisation approached the council and proposed to transform the existing framework of citizen participation in light of this innovative experience. In Salford, the situation remained blocked for many years, because no compromise was found between the position of the NGO and the one of council members and city officers. The situation only changed after the idea of PB had started to spread through the country and provided the local actors with a new procedural format and new ideas about this

process. The procedure that eventually was implemented in one city area of Salford (Claremont / Weaste & Seedley) does not belong to the most innovative examples of participatory budgeting in Great Britain, although it is quite a 'typical' case in procedural terms. It witnesses the lack of overall political support for this initiative, which is why it has been implemented at the margins of the political system and without link to the institutional framework or existing *référentiel*.

The participatory budgeting process in the district of Berlin Lichtenberg (chapter 10) has been the first process in a large German city, as well as the first case in Germany where civil society activists brought the process on the political agenda and where the initiators and organisers actively referred to the Porto Alegre model. Until then, German participatory budgeting institutions had been introduced by organisations and ideas linked to the New Public Management reform agenda. The Lichtenberg process is therefore an exceptional case, at least with regard to the scale of action and the ambitions of the organisers. Like the initiators of the 'High school participatory budget' in Poitou-Charentes, they wanted to go beyond the existing practice of participatory budgeting and initiate a new, more far-reaching type of process. I will show in this chapter that the process confers citizens with more influence and scope of action than in the models of the first period of PB in Germany, but that it does not modify the fact that policy makers alone judge the legitimacy and feasibility of citizens' perspectives. This is the reason why it represents above all a developed form of user-oriented administration and has led to the confirmation and strengthening of the existing *référentiel* of the district administration, the citizens' commune.

The **general conclusion** summarises the main empirical and theoretical findings of this work in a comparative perspective. It first evaluates the analytic value of the concepts that guided the empirical research (frame, *référentiel*) and thereafter draws a comparative picture about the frames of citizen participation discussed in the previous chapters, as well as the processes of their emergence and diffusion. Moreover, it addresses the factors that influence the institutional designing and implementation of PB and approaches them from the perspective of institutional change in order to provide a more general picture as to the question of the impacts of PB on the administrative structure. Finally, it addresses the question of the innovative character of participatory budgeting and links it to the different types of frames discussed before.

PART I

A comparative, qualitative case study about frames of citizen participation and participatory budgeting

Chapter 1

Ideas in form of frames and *référentiels*

This chapter presents and discusses the two main theoretical concepts used in this study: the concepts of frame (e.g. Benford, Snow 2000; Campbell 2002) and of *référentiel* (e.g. Jobert 1989; Muller 2000). They allow for the analysis of the role of ideas in public policies and/or political processes, in the present case ideas related to the theme of citizen participation and participatory budgeting. Both terms, as defined in the present framework, represent those ideas or concepts that are created and used by social actors themselves. This is the reason why I follow a different perspective and approach as in studies where it is the researcher, who establishes concepts in order to analyse the social reality (e.g. Boltanski, Thévenot 2006).[1] The chapter starts with an introduction about the renewed emphasis within the social sciences to studying the role of ideas. It then discusses the literature of the frame and *référentiel* concepts. As none of the existing definitions fits my research orientation, I will propose a new definition of the notion of frame, elaborated mainly on the basis of the public policy and social movement literature. In the end, I present other concepts for dealing with the role of ideas, namely discourse, ideology, and polity.

I. Increased interest in the investigation of ideas

The last years have witnessed increased interest in the domain of ideas within the social sciences. Scholars have provided different classifications of ideas (Campbell 2002; Rueschemeyer 2006),[2] which can take the form of "paradigms, discourses, norms, models of interpretation [*Deutungsmuster*], conceptions of the world [*Weltbild*er], culture(s),

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[1] For a more detailed argumentation see section II,3 of this chapter.
[2] Rueschemeyer's overview (2006: 227-28) is more encompassing that Campbell's approach. It establishes the following classification: numeral (single ideas, idea complexes and broad ensembles of ideas which form a symbolic culture); normative and cognitive; thematic (political, social, technical, etc. ideas); explicit and implicit; and reflective and non-reflective ideas.

orientations (of interaction), (implicit) theories, schemes, narratives, beliefs, frames, story lines, public philosophies, symbolic technologies, référentiels, etc." (Maier 2003: 26).

Studying ideas has become quite a prominent research orientation in different domains, e.g. institutionalism (particularly Schmidt 2008), rational choice (Busch 1999), or social movement studies (Gamson 1992; Snow, Benford 2000). Ideas can be studied from different inquiry paradigms (like (post-) positivism, constructivism, critical theories) and with different methods (qualitative and/or quantitative).[3] My work on participatory budgeting is based upon a moderate form of constructivism (assuming that not everything is constructed and that contextual constraints are important) combined with a qualitative methodology. It therefore relates to the body of 'interpretive studies' which have emerged since the 1960s and 70s.

From the early 1900s to World War II and thereafter, positivist perspectives dominated social science research, qualitative approaches included. Following to this orientation, the subjectivity of the researcher is a bias that distorts an accurate view of reality and therefore needs to be eliminated as much as possible from the research process; the objects of study are represented as external objects. Whilst positivism represented for a long time the "orthodox consensus" in social science methodology (Mottier 2005: 2), various 'turns' have taken place since around the late 1960s and 1970s, for instance an "interpretative turn" (Rabinow and Sullivan 1987), a "linguistic turn" (Rorty 1967) or a "discursive turn" (Torfing 2005: 21). There exists no overall framework to the extremely various and diverging approaches within this broad field of 'interpretive studies', but they generally acknowledge the role of 'soft' factors like ideas and the constructed nature of social reality.[4] In the present work, the attention to the role of ideas is integrated into a broader analytical framework, which also considers the role of agency and structure.[5]

In addition, I deal with the diffusion of ideas and practices. As the empirical analyses will show, the diffusion of frames or processes is strongly linked to the advocacy work of single actors, who select a certain frame in order to establish a new political programme or to pursue other strategic or normative goals. It is possible to distinguish direct, mediated and indirect

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[3] See the article by Guba and Lincoln (2005) on the differences (of ontology, epistemology, methodology) between these different paradigms. Whereas the positivist paradigm is inherently linked to the use of quantitative methods, the other inquiry paradigms do allow a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods.
[4] Some radical, postmodern, perspectives deny the existence of any form of social reality.
[5] See figure 1 in introduction.

processes of diffusion.[6] Direct diffusion involves social actors who bring one idea from one place to the other and try implementing it; mediated diffusion is related to those processes where single or groups of actors transport a new idea or process and try to convince policy makers to implement it; indirect diffusion passes through non personal ties like the media and internet. Whereas these different dynamics will be illuminated in the empirical chapters, it is first important to specify the main theoretical concepts that have guided the empirical work. These are the notions of frame and of *référentiel*.

II. Definition of concepts: frames, *référentiels*

What are frames and *référentiels*, and what are their similarities and differences? It is a general feature of the literature on ideas (but not only that literature) that existing concepts are used within varying approaches or that similar definitions of different concepts exist.[7] It is not my purpose here to present a detailed overview and comparison of all existing variations of frames and *référentiels*. For this reason, this section deals only with those approaches that have directly or indirectly influenced the process of concept definition. Whereas I develop an own and specific frame definition, I follow the interpretation(s) provided in the literature about *référentiels*.

1) Frames: Flexible, but relatively coherent idea combinations

The notion of frame has been widely dealt with in different disciplines (for an overview Entman 1993; Fischer 1997). It is used in a Rational Choice perspective in terms of situational goals that influence individual beliefs and behaviour (Lindenberg 2000). Social movement scholars have analysed the social-psychological processes by which individuals develop from bystanders into participants of collective action (Gamson 1992) or strategic frame activities of movement leaders in order to mobilise bystander support and acquire resources (Benford and Snow 2000). Campbell, a scholar of public policy, presents a similar perspective, arguing that

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[6] See chapter 4,1 for a more detailed discussion of the diffusion concept.
[7] Maarten Hajer's definition of a discourse, for instance ("a specific ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorizations that are produced, reproduced, and transformed in a particular set of practices and through which meaning is given to physical and social realities", Hajer 1995: 44) comes close to what others would consider as a frame (below).

"political elites strategically craft frames and use them to legitimize their policies to the public and each other" (Campbell 2002: 27). In other parts of the public policy literature, frames are dealt with in terms of "underlying structures of beliefs, perception, and appreciation" that "can be uncovered through the analysis of the stories that the various participants are disposed to tell about policy situations" (Fischer 2003: 144-45; also Schön, Rein 1994). Erving Goffman, in his seminal work "Frame Analysis" (Goffman 1986), considers frames as cognitive devices orienting the actions and interaction of social actors in concrete situations.[8]

In the present study, I consider frames as relatively coherent idea combinations, which change over time and are therefore flexible entities. Frames contain a selective representation of reality, focussing on some issues, whilst others are left outside consideration. As such, frames can be considered as "a reduction of social complexity" (Della Porta, Diani 2006: 70-71). Frames do not represent abstract categories established by the researcher in order to study the social reality, but are made by social actors themselves. They can find an expression through particular terms, for instance the citizens' commune or participatory democracy. Some actors use these terms explicitly when talking or writing about the topic of citizen participation. Others, however, lay out a certain perspective of citizen participation without establishing a clear reference to an overarching concept. This is the reason why a frame can constitute an explicit reference point in the 'forefront' of public debates, or the more indirect reference points of citizen participation contained, for instance, in the discourses of social actors.

At this point the concept of social actor should be clarified. I generally intend as social actors those people who are 'in the field', i.e. the objects of my research project. In the present case, however, many of these actors are also linked to the academic sphere. They have a double position as academic scholars who work and analyse the social reality and as actors who are part of this reality (I also belong to this group, as well as many other scholars of 'participatory governance'). Gerhard Banner, for instance, is a professor of public administration; he has invented the concept of the citizens' commune, which he then used within his academic publications (Banner 1998, 1999). At the same time, he has also been director of a large German think tank that masterminded the introduction of New Public Management reforms in Germany and is therefore also an actor 'in the field' (moreover, he is the one who brought the

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[8] Goffman's work (1986) played an important role for scholars of social movements. It stands at the origin of an alternative perspective on contentious mobilisation, one that goes beyond the then dominant focus on resource mobilisation and the costs and benefits of social protest (e.g. Zald, Ash 1966; Tilly 1978).

process of participatory budgeting on the political agenda). Is the concept of citizens' commune therefore a concept 'made by social actors themselves'? I argue that this is the case, as soon as the concept exits the academic borders and becomes a widespread notion in public debates. A concept like the citizens' commune therefore might have emerged as intellectual construct, but thereafter becomes a widely shared and 'public' reference point.

In this regard it is also necessary to underline that frames are not the monopole of the political, academic, and administrative elite who very often create new terms. A participant in a participatory budget meeting in Berlin Lichtenberg can delineate a frame of citizen participation as well as a politician like Ségolène Royal or Hazel Blears. The perspective of 'ordinary citizens' might be not as coherent and systematic as the one by political (or academic) actors, who regularly even establish a written description of their perspectives; but it can also be a frame, i.e. a relatively coherent description of the topic at stake.

Frames bring together two elements: a label (participatory democracy; community empowerment) and a specific content. This is why there exist two broad possibilities of a change of frames: the label remains identical and the content changes, because other themes emerge in a changed context and/or because new actors define the term differently;[9] or it is the label that changes and the idea combination remains more or less identical.[10] In the first case, the 'new' frame does usually integrate some elements of the previous frame and combines them with new ideas (Jann 2002: 302). Using the vocabulary of social movement research, both possibilities represent a case of "frame transformation" (the changing of former understandings) and of "frame bridging" (the combination of hitherto unconnected ideas) (Benford, Snow 2000: 624f.).

Both social movement and public policy scholars operationalise frames as idea combinations that link the "prognosis" of a problematic situation with a "diagnosis" about what actors can do about it (Snow and Benford 1988; Hall 1993; Nahrath 1999). Moreover, frames include the definition of the goals of a situation or process, an element social movement scholars deal with in terms of the "motivation" to join collective action (Snow and Benford 1988).[11] As

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[9] One example in this regard is for example the differences between the participatory democracy frame of the 1970s (with regard to the bottom-up movements in the USA) and the approach of the 1990s developed by certain actors in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in relation to the participatory budget process (see chapter 2).

[10] For instance, the shift from proximity to participatory democracy in France during the last decade (chapter 5).

[11] Gamson (1992), in turn, defines collective action frames as a combination of identity (specifying a group with shared interests and values – the 'we' opposed to 'them'), agency (recognising that the current situation can be

such, frames combine cognitive (how the world is) and normative (how the world should be) considerations. In addition, I operationalise frames in terms of their ideological foundation, as well as with regard to the key features of the process at stake, in the present case citizen participation. This includes aspects like the influence of citizens on the process outcomes (consultation or decision-making) and the procedural rules, the level of participation (micro-local and/or beyond) and the scope of influence. Actors do not necessarily spell out all these aspects when talking or writing about a topic like proximity democracy or community empowerment, but they provide a general scheme of analysis.

Often, the more definitions of a concept exist, the more widespread it is. So, a concept can also become a 'master frame', which occupies a dominant position within a certain context (Snow and Benford 1992). Within the social movement literature, master frames have a dominant position in the sense that their interpretation of a situation, event, or process strongly influences, maybe even determines the framing activities of other groups. Master frames have in this sense a larger "interpretative scope" than a single-movement frame (Benford, Snow 2000: 619), which constitute local "derivatives" (Snow, Benford 1992: 138).[12]

In the present study, all concepts I deal with are in this sense master frames, because they constitute the central and most widespread term with regard to the topic of citizen participation within the national borders. Unlike in the social movement literature, I do not consider single frame interpretations in terms of "derivatives", but as one approach that exists next to many others. From this perspective, there cannot exist 'the one' definition of a (master) frame, but multiple, more or less diverging perspectives (at the same time, it can happen that a certain frame definition becomes dominant within a particular context).

A master frame designates a broader ideological and discursive configuration than a 'single' frame, because it subsumes different ideas and approaches. In other words: different 'single' frames, as well as other ideas and discourses, are part of a master frame. The existence of a

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changed if the 'we' becomes active), and injustice (placing blame for grievances on 'them' and inciting members of 'we' to respond).

[12] Snow and Benford argue that master frames are particularly relevant in periods of "protest cycles". These cycles represent a sequence of social mobilisation, which is of greater intensity than in 'normal' times, which spreads throughout social and territorial frontiers and involves new protest and organisational forms (Tarrow 1998). A historical example for a master frame is the 'right frame' that dominated American civil right organisations during the 1960s.

(or several) master frame(s) does not exclude the simultaneous existence of other frames. At least in democratic societies, there always exist conflicting frames (Jann 2002: 302). These 'counter' or 'minority' frames are for instance used within a smaller geographic area as the nation state; they might also be linked to the interests and perspectives of people, who do not occupy a dominant position in existing power relations, but seek to diffuse and impose their perspectives (see below for the perspective of the *référentiel* concept).

Social actors can use and construct frames with different purposes. For instance, they can use them with the aim of communicating and justifying their political programme to the public or their colleagues. For example, the mayor of Berlin Lichtenberg uses the concept of citizens' commune in such a way, as well as Ségolène Royal in the region of Poitou-Charentes with the notion of participatory democracy. This act of communication and justification can also, and usually does include strategic considerations. Policy makers or other actors do not innocently use certain terms, but usually select very consciously the concepts they will be using in public speeches. Frames can also constitute more or less explicit normative-programmatic orientations of actors that influence their actions, although this is not the main perspective followed here.

Social movement scholars usually explain the success or failure of a movement with regard to the existing political context (called "political opportunity structure"[13]) and the processes of "resonance"[14] between movement frames and the existing cultural framework and cognitive structures of potential recruits (e.g. Della Porta, Diani 2006). Whilst I do not engage with cognitive explanations and analyses, the idea of frame resonance points to the fact that certain frames of citizen participation capture particularly well important themes, orientations or tendencies of a particular moment in time. In other words: they express a certain '*Zeitgeist*' or '*air du temps*'. One of the two persons who introduced the citizens' commune concept in Germany expresses this point as follows:

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[13] In Kriesi et al (1995), "Political Opportunity Structre" is defined as containing four main elements: the salience of existing cleavages in society; the configuration of power; certain features of the (formal) political institutions; and the prevailing strategies of authorities to deal with challengers. I prefer to speak simply of the political context, because I consider (partly) other aspects than in the social movement literature and because I prefer the more flexible term of context instead that of 'structure'.

[14] The "resonance" of a frame within a particular context contains four elements: consistency (congruency between the articulated beliefs, claims, and actions of a movement); empirical credibility (the apparent fit between the frame and events in the world); credibility of the frame articulator (with regard to its status and/or perceived expertise); and salience to target mobilisation (Benford, Snow 2000: 620-21).

"Suddenly I thought of the citizens' commune; derived from citizens' society (*Bürgergesellschaft*). Citizens' society and civil society (*Zivilgesellschaft*) were widely spread terms at the beginning of the 1990s. And suddenly I thought of the citizens' commune (..). In my perception, this term was in the air. (…) Suddenly I understood that this notion transports much of those things that a municipality should be made of (…)."[15]

The fact that some frames do express elements of the current political context also means, *vice versa*, that there exist social, historic and political conditions of the emergence and diffusion of a frame. The emergence and success of the proximity democracy frame in France, for instance, has to be seen in relation to the growing critique of the traditional Republican approach that conveys elected representatives with the unique power to make decisions. Similarly, the diffusion of the citizens' commune is, amongst others, linked to the spread of participatory devices in Germany since the beginning of the 1990s. The existence of master frames, as well as the link between frames and the political context, point also to the fact that frames are collective concepts. Even when single actors create or define them, they are always linked to patterns of the political context and to the definitions and discourses of different social actors.

2) *Référentiels* – linking ideas to power and identity

French post-Marxist scholars Bruno Jobert and Pierre Muller developed the concept of *référentiel* for dealing with the ideational and power dimension of public policies.[16] In this perspective, public policies are not simply a means to solve particular problems, but do also represent frames of interpretation of the world. They 'carry' a certain problem definition (e.g. the problem of exclusion) as well as a certain representation of social groups (state professionals; groups of the population, which are the object of public policies) and contain a theory of social change (Muller 1995: 159).[17]

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[15] Interview with Gerhard Banner, 26.2.2009 (see chapter 7).
[16] The authors of the référentiel concept refuse the label of 'studying ideas'. Following Muller (2000: 193), the cognitive approach to public policies does not rely on the – articifial – distinction between 'ideas' and 'interests', but considers that public policies rely on, or come into being on the basis of, specific frames of reference that intrinsiquely link ideas and interests (below). For a similar perspective, see Schmidt (2008).
[17] It can be analytically divided to four levels: values (what is good or bad, desirable or not), norms (principles of action), algorithms (causal relations, which express a theory of action in the sense of "if...then" sentences), and images (a simplified or concentrated definition of a situation or process, e.g. "the young dynamic and modern farmer") (Muller 1995).

The *référentiel* approach is more encompassing than the notion of frame in that it links the existence or dominance of certain perspectives or ideas to the power position of actors and to their identity. The actors of a policy sector construct their identity on the basis of the valid *référentiel* (Braun 1999: 17), which is elaborated by actors that seek for more power. In contrast to the notion of frame as defined here, a *référentiel* does not always designate a term created by social actors, but can also be an academic construct. Zittoun (2008: 84) has underlined the tension that exists in the literature between the construction of an ideational/normative universe by the actors themselves (what he calls a "predictive" *référentiel*) and the ex-post construction of a *référentiel* by the researcher ("*référentiel* de politique publique"). With regard to the latter, one example is the 'modernisation *référentiel*', a term developed by Muller in order to designate French public policies from the late 1940s to the 1960s.

The scholars who invented the *référentiel* approach distinguish between a global and a sectoral *référentiel*, because the policy process is constituted by the reciprocal adjustment of the divergent sectoral activities within an overall and constraining global conception of society (Braun 1999: 44). As the name indicates, a "global" *référentiel* is situated at the macro level. It specifies not only the nature of single public policies or of specific groups or professions, but the ordering principle of an entire society and of its future.[18] As such, it designates the type of relations between the state and interest groups and contains specific concepts of the state and civil society (Muller 1995: 169-70).

In addition to this global framework exist "sectoral" *référentiels*. A sectoral *référentiel*

> "constitutes the dominant collective definition of a sectoral activity or a profession. It is a social construction that corresponds to the perception of the dominant group in the sector and that defines its limits, its internal organisation as well as the collective identity of the actors involved in the sector" (Nahrat 1999: 58).

These sectoral frames of reference are situated at a lower level of abstraction than global ones, because they concern single areas or specific professional groups. Compared to a frame, however, a sectoral *référentiel* is much more encompassing in the sense of touching upon the

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[18] Schmidt (2008) elaborates a similar perspective with the term "master discourse": "it presents an (at least seemingly) coherent political programme that provides a 'vision' of where the policy is, where it is going to, and where it ought to go".

collective identity of the involved actors and on the internal organisation of the policy sector. Once a certain *référentiel* is established (after an active work of interpretation and adaptation by social actors), its underlying values and norms are to a large extent taken for granted by the involved actors and impose themselves to them. Like a policy paradigm (Hall 1993),[19] a *référentiel* forms then a relatively coherent construct:

> "They [paradigms, world-views and *référentiels*] show a considerable degree of coherence with regard to their internal structure (last principles, values, norms, goals and techniques to be used) and can, therefore, contribute to collective action because actors can share principles and norms and know what they want and how they should achieve it" (Braun 1999: 15).

Whilst this is the original and probably most widespread perspective, other approaches exist in the literature. Ziffoun has summarised them and proposed a framework for explaining the success of certain ideas. This framework involves three phases, each of which implies another type of *référentiel* (Zittoun 2008: 76-78):

1) The emergence of a new *référentiel* ("*référentiel* prédictif") by a group of actors, who are not occupying a dominant or hegemonic power position, but aim to becoming more powerful. This new *référentiel* contains a picture of the respective policy sector, of the actors, their roles and power relations. In this period, the *référentiel* is closely linked to the actors that carry it; there exist as many such *référentiels* as groups of actors;

2) A troublesome period, during which a new group takes the power, because it succeeded in imposing its *référentiel*. For doing so, it had to transform its *référentiel* in order to make it acceptable for the now dominated actors. The new "*référentiel* négocié dominant" is not necessarily coherent, because it represents a compromise of social groups with asymmetric power positions;

3) After this period, the new *référentiel* becomes institutionalised ("*référentiel* de la politique publique"). It thereby becomes "automous and imposes itself to the social actors" (ibid: 79). This third type, which will assure the stability of public policies and

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[19] The concept of policy paradigm (Hall 1993) has some similarities with the notion of (global) *référentiel* (for a comparison see Nahrath 1999). A paradigm is like a "*Gestalt*", which is "embedded in the very terminology through which policymakers communicate about their work, and it is influential precisely because so much of it is taken for granted and unnameable to scrutiny as a whole" (Hall 1993: 279, italics in original). Like in the framework of a *référentiel*, the concept of paradigm implies that a particular set of ideas, once established, becomes quite autonomous from the interpretations of social actors.

the existing power positions, can only be deduced from existing policy instruments and not from certain actor groups or their interpretations.

My definition of a frame comes most closely to the first type of *référentiel.* It is also transported by certain actors, but does not usually involve a definition of the identity of involved actors and of their power position.[20] The second type is interesting in that it points to the fact that the guiding principles of public policies (as well as the related policy instruments) are not necessarily coherent, but can represent a compromise between different perspectives.[21] The concept of proximity in French public debates could probably be analysed in terms of the third, most encompassing approach. In the following chapters, I will use the concept of *référentiel* mainly in the third sense. I conceive such a *référentiel* never as completely hegemonic (shared by all actors[22]), but rather as one dominant perspective and approach that exist next to other, diverging perspectives. This perspective is also shared by Streeck and Thelen (2005) with regard to institutional arrangements:

> "While some institutional arrangements may impose a dominant logic of action, these typically coexist with other arrangements, created at different points in time and under different historical circumstances, that embody conflicting and even contradictory logics" (Streeck, Thelen 2005: 20).

In the following chapters, I will refer to the concept of *référentiel* with regard to the national level (i.e. changes and developments of normative concepts in the making of public policies, chapters 5 to 7) as well as in the framework of the PB case studies (chapters 8 to 10) in order to identify the degree to which a frame of citizen participation might have provoked changes in the internal organisational structure of the administration.

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[20] Zittoun (2008) proposes instead the notion of "énoncé de politique publique" for dealing with the actors' discourses and concepts. He defines an "énoncé" as a more flexible [*souple*] category than the *référentiel*, which contains the following elements: the specification of a problem and a solution; the elboration of a cartography with all legitimate organisations; an inextricable link between "énoncé", the person who produces and the one who receives it; the difficulty to "keep together the components" (Zittoun 2008: 86-87).

[21] The situation in the administration of the Poitou-Charentes region could be interpreted in these terms (see chapter 8).

[22] Capano (1999) distinguishes between "hegemonic" and "dominant" policy paradigms. The first is supposedly shared by all members of a policy community, whilst the latter co-exists with other "minority" paradigms.

3) Other concepts: discourse, ideology, polity

After having defined the concepts of frame and of *référentiel*, I now turn to the three other notions that scholars use in order to study ideas: discourse, ideology, and polity. In the present study, a discourse is considered in its 'common sense' definition: as textual and/or oral production of social actors ('the discourse about participatory democracy by Ségolène Royal').[23] This discourse or these discourses are not necessarily, and are usually not, coherent (Hajer 2005: 44). A discourse does not necessarily have an influence on the policy practice. The threefold distinction with regard to the concept of *référentiel* just presented, however, points to the fact that new discourses can provoke the modification of the social practice; this is usually filtered through various institutional and agency-related factors and can in the beginning take the form of 'mere' or even 'false' discourses. This is the perspective of Gerhard Banner, one of the two persons who coined the term citizens' commune, who sustains that through the mechanism of 'cognitive dissonance' a modified discourse will also lead to a change in the policy practice:

> "The citizens' commune is established. There is no mayor in Germany today who would say: 'my city is no citizens' commune and I don't want it to happen, I think it is wrong'. (…) This would be political suicide. (…) When people start talking differently than it may in the beginning happen in form of a mere lip-service. If, however, I continue to talk differently than before, then I will at a certain point also start thinking differently. Otherwise cognitive dissonance is created and people do not bear this over a long period of time."[24]

Ideas can also be approached in terms of an ideology. The concept of ideology has received various interpretations (for an overview see Harrington et al. 2006). Often, they are referred to in terms of "a whole coherent set of integrated principles and assumptions" about the world (Della Porta, Diani 2006: 79), a sort of theory about society. Following the Marxist interpretation laid out for the first time in "The German Ideology" by Marx and Engels (1845-46) and carried on thereafter by many other 'critical' scholars, ideologies hide existing power

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[23] Discourses have been subject to diverse interpretations. A discourse can be the content of what person A says to person B; the sum of text and talk of an organisation, institution or even society about a certain topic and at a given moment ('1990s immigration discourse', 'European Commission's 2000 discourse about gender', etc.); a type of social practice (that might contain the rules of what can be said and by whom in the Foucauldian tradition); or even be "coterminous with the social" like in the work of Jacques Derrida (Torfing 2005: 8). Other scholars have developed different definitions of a discourse, for instance Hajer (1995) and Schmidt (2002; 2008).
[24] Interview with Gerhard Banner, 26.2.2009.

relations and present the status quo as natural. In this perspective, ideologies represent a perspective on the world, which is distorted by particular interests of members of the ruling class. One aim of critical scholarship is then to 'uncover' this falsified presentation of the world. It would be possible to conceive the terms participatory democracy and citizens' commune as an ideology in the Marxist sense. This would mean to investigate what kind of power relations and particular interest are 'hidden' in this terminology (and the actions carried out under this label) by those actors who implicitly or explicitly diffuse and present these concepts in the public sphere, or to investigate the unconscious orientations of the population. In the present work, however, I do not adopt this perspective. I think it is more fruitful to consider notions like participatory democracy as idea combinations that different actors use with diverging strategies, but which are also linked to patterns of the political and institutional context, which in turn influence the definition and implementation of these terms.

Finally, I do not follow the approach developed by Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot (2006), who created the concept of 'polity' (original *cité*). Polities represent systematic expressions of forms of the public good, laying out legitimate ways of argumentation and action. Actors refer to these polities in moments of critique or justification in order to give more weight or legitimacy to their arguments. Following Boltanski and Thévenot, a plurality of polities or of justificatory principles exist today. Although polities are historical products and therefore change over time, it is possible to single out the set of existing polities at a given moment in time, and for certain types of societies.[25] In "On justification", they propose six such polities or main logics of justification. Each one is ideal-typically constructed on the basis of important philosophical, theological or economic *oeuvres*: Saint-Augustine for the "inspired polity" (*cité inspirée*), Bossuet for the "domestic polity" (*cité domestique*), Hobbes for the "polity of fame" (*cité de l'opinion*), Rousseau for the "civic polity" (*cité civique*), Saint-Simon for the "industrial polity" (*cité industrielle*), and Smith for the "market polity" (*cité marchande*). Whilst the notion of policy inspired and influenced the process of concept definition, I finally decided not to use it actively for the empirical research. Polities are too remote from the concepts I am interested in here (participatory democracy, citizens' commune, etc.); these notions would probably all be situated within the 'civic polity'. Moreover, polities represent ideal-typical constructions, i.e. artificial creations developed by

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[25] The authors assume, more or less implicitly, that these abstract schemata are rooted in the common cultural heritage of modern societies. It should be stated, however, that the six and more polities that have been developed seem to reflect the heritage of western societies rather than that of other, completely different cultural contexts like Asia or Africa.

the researcher, whereas I focus on concepts and terms developed and defined by social actors themselves.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed and defined the concepts of frame and of *référentiel* and introduced other notions used to study the role of ideas (discourse, ideology, polity). Frames have been defined as concepts that are created and used by social actors and change their meaning over time. They are collective concepts that involve a label and a specific content. They can become widespread notions ('master frames'), which subsume different interpretations. There never exists 'the one' frame definition, but different ones, even if certain approaches become more widespread than others. The creation or emergence of frames is linked to the social, political, cultural and economic conditions of the surrounding context. Social actors use and construct frames with different purposes, for instance communicative, justificatory, and strategic. The *référentiel* approach is more encompassing than the notion of frame in that it adds the power position and identity of actors to the prevalence of certain perspectives or ideas. The actors of a policy sector construct their identity on the basis of the valid *référentiel*, which also informs the selection of policy instruments and the overall policy approach. A *référentiel* changes less easily and quickly than a frame. Both concepts are related to ideas and terms created by social actors and are no analytic constructions of the researcher.

After this conceptual clarification, the next chapter introduces the topic of citizen participation. It will deal with the theoretical, procedural and contextual developments that have taken place in the field of civic involvement and discuss the literature about participatory budgeting.

Chapter 2

Citizen participation – a multiform phenomenon

Had Max Weber analysed the present-day situation by pointing to the increasing distance between the legitimacy claims of elected representatives and the peoples' belief in the legitimacy of the democratic order (Müller 2007: 128)? Are citizens even becoming a "scarce resource of the political order" (Münkler 1997: 153)? The widespread symptoms of a 'crisis' of representative democracy, which touches many, if not all Western democracies through sinking levels of trust in politicians and institutions, as well as a growing voter abstention or the rise of nationalist tendencies, seem to point into this direction. In this situation of democratic *malaise*, the direct implication of citizens appears more and more as a necessary and inevitable counter-strategy for the maintenance of the democratic order. The virtues of participation are praised by various local, national and international organisations, as well as by territorial entities and nation states.[1] Although the frame of participatory democracy seems to occupy today a prominent position in these documents and discourses, the overall situation is characterised by a nebulous discursive universe around notions like participation, involvement, consultation, empowerment, co-management, user-orientation, etc., which are related to different ideological sources (post-authoritarian socialism, governance, New Public Management, libertarian traditions, neo-corporatism, etc.).[2]

This discursive and ideological variety points to the fact that 'citizen participation' is a complex phenomenon, which can take various procedural forms, produce diverging and unexpected effects, be linked to different objectives, frames and be part of diverging broader models of participation (Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b: 234). This multiplicity of possible forms and outcomes also raises a question about the relation between citizen participation and democracy: does more citizen participation necessarily provoke an 'increase' of democracy or

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[1] The number of policy documents is enourmous and cannot be fully scrutinised. With regard to international organisations, see the overview in Blondiaux (2008) and, for instance, Viera da Cunha (1997); OECD (2001); Caddy, Peixoto (2006); Schmitter, Trechsel (2004). As to the local and national level, see the developments in the following chapters.
[2] See the table about six global participatory models in (Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b).

of democratic goods (like inclusiveness, popular control, considered judgement and transparency; Smith 2009a: 12)? Or can citizen participation be part of institutional settings that do not necessarily strengthen all, or parts, of these goods? Unless an answer to these questions is rooted in a democratic theory that either confirms or negates it ('normative' versus 'functionalist' theories of democracy), it necessitates a careful analysis of empirical settings and processes. In the following chapter, these questions will be investigated with regard to participatory budget institutions in Europe.

The first part of this chapter provides an empirical picture of existing traditional and innovative participation procedures, as well as of the contextual factors that have favoured their spread. The chapter then deals with the literature about citizen participation, which is sometimes labelled in terms of participatory, local or urban 'governance' (e.g. Fung, Wright 2003a; Grote, Gbikpi 2002; Melo, Baiocchi 2006). Because this body of literature is very broad and heterogeneous, it has to focus on the most relevant theories for the analysis of PB institutions – participatory and deliberative democracy theories – and a limited selection of studies that develop hypotheses about the changed nature of democratic legitimacy in reaction to the spread of various participatory practices. Third, a literature review of participatory budget institutions is presented and the focus of the present research justified in relation to the existing body of literature.

I. A global spread of traditional and innovative participatory instruments

"The development of procedures that involve citizens in the making of decisions that concern them is one of the major features of the recent evolution of democratic regimes" (Rosanvallon 2007: 301). This development seems to concern above all Europe, North- and South America (Revel et al 2007: 12), although diverse participatory instruments do also exist in Africa, Australia, Japan, Bengal, India and China (and other places).[3] The Porto Alegre participatory

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[3] There exists no encompassing overview. In Japan and Australia, some 'deliberative' processes have been organised (Fishkin 1997; Sintomer 2007). In West Bengal and India, forms of administrative and fiscal devolution to the local level ('Panchayat reforms') have retained international attention (Fung, Wright 2003). Some participatory budget processes exist in Africa and, more recently, in China. Agenda 21 procedures are carried out in various countries over the whole globe. Forms like participatory appraisal are most commonly set up in economically less developed countries, for instance in Uganda (Smith 2009a: 32), and fostered by institutions like the World Bank.

budgeting process has further stimulated the spread of participatory instruments, as well as the theoretical reflection about this development. What kind of participatory processes exist in Europe (and other parts of the world) today? How can the spread of these instruments over the last years be explained? What are the goals related to participatory devices?

There exist many different possibilities for classifying participatory instruments. It is possible to distinguish them, for instance, with regard to their origins (bottom-up and/or top-down). Top-down participatory processes have been set up by policy makers and can be considered as "state sponsored" forms of citizen participation (Lang 2007) or processes of "participatory engineering" through political elites (Zittel, Fuchs 2007). Many European participatory budgets belong to this group, but also instruments that social scientists have developed, e.g. citizen juries (Dienel 2002; Crosby, Nethercut 2005) and deliberative polls (Fishkin 1997).[4] These initiatives differ from bottom-up initiatives, which are created and managed by citizens themselves (e.g. forms of bottom-up community development,[5] autonomous neighbourhood committees, etc.), as well as from joint bottom-up and top-down initiatives. The participatory budgeting process of Porto Alegre is amongst the most famous examples of this group, where policy makers and local associations and movements together have developed this new participatory process (Abers 2000; Baiocchi 2005; Gret, Sintomer 2007).

Another criterion is the degree of power of citizens in the process. The question of power is related to the role of citizens in the defining of the procedural rules and in the management of the participatory process. Moreover, it is linked to the question if participants are provided with decision-making competences or are informed and consulted on political questions. A widespread problem of participatory instruments is the limited or even inexistent link to the decision-making process. In procedures like citizen juries, deliberative polls and consensus conferences, a randomly selected representative sample or "mini-public" of citizens (Goodin, Dryzek 2006; Sintomer 2007) discuss for several days about a controversial issue and maybe even elaborate a final written statement. When policy-makers do not consider the results of the participation, however, nothing might happen once the procedure is over. In these cases, a dilemma emerges between the learning process of citizens, who spend several days debating

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[4] Dienel, Crosby and Fishkin have trademarked the participatory instruments they developed. Despite important differences with regard to the number of participants and concrete functioning, citizen juries and deliberative polls (as well as consensus conferences; see Bourg, Boy 2005; Joss, Durant 1995) are based on similar principles: the participation of a restricted group of 'ordinary' citizens (often selected by lot) which deliberates about a controversial issue and elaborates a consultative document containing the main findings of the debates.
[5] See, for instance, the examples analysed in (Bacqué 2003).

about a topic and become quasi-experts of the issue, and the little, if any impact on decisions (Talpin 2009). One example is the electronic participatory assembly about the climate change organised by the Poitou-Charentes region in 2008 (ibid). A positive counter-example is the citizen assembly on electoral reform in British Columbia (2004). A group of 160 randomly selected citizens elaborated a recommendation for the national electoral reform, which was put to a binding popular vote through referendum (Lang 2007). Although the referendum eventually failed, this example belongs to the few cases today that combine a high quality discussion about a national topic discussed by a representative sample of citizens together with the logic of direct democracy.

The reasons for the limited impact of citizens on the decision-making apparatus can be political (no strong political will to consider the results) or 'technical' (propositions not feasible or outside the domain of competence of the organising body). In addition, the reasons can be of more subtle nature, e.g. linked to the status of citizens as 'lay persons' who participate (Fromentin, Wojcik 2008). Their position in participatory processes is often ambiguous. On the one hand, they are supposed to enlarge the circle of discussion and to bring into the debate new and 'not-interested' perspectives. On the other hand, their position is not based on a specific legitimacy beyond that of being a 'lay person', which is why decision-makers might not easily accept the propositions put forward by them (Ferrando Y Puig 2008 : 109).

Third, participatory instruments can be classified following to their degree of 'innovation', which includes some of the before-mentioned aspects.[6] Innovative can be those measures that assure an effective "empowered participatory governance" (Fung, Wright 2003a)[7] or that "have been specifically designed to increase and deepen citizen participation in the political decision-making process (…) and represent a departure from the traditional institutional architecture that we normally attribute to advanced industrial democracies. They take us beyond familiar institutionalised forms of citizen participation" (Smith 2009a: 1). Different possibilities exist in order to raise the level of innovation. One can mention, for instance,

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[6] Many other classifications are possible, for instance with regard to certain types of procedures (Smith 2009a), to the types of citizens that participate or the duration of participation (Bacqué, Rey, Sintomer 2005: 14-24). See also (Roth 1997) and (Blondiaux 2005) who developed 'nationally informed' classifications.
[7] Processes of this kind "all aspire to deepen the ways in which ordinary people can effectively participate in and influence policies which directly affect their lives (…). They are participatory because they rely upon the commitment and capacities of ordinary people to make sensible decisions through reasoned deliberation and empowered because they attempt to tie action to discussion" (Fung, Wright 2003a: 5).

political measures to increase the influence and power of participants in the process; the use of innovative techniques (random selection) in order to reach beyond the 'usual suspects';[8] and the adventuring of new scales of participation (beyond the local level) or of new discussion topics (highly technical issues like electoral systems, municipal budgets, etc.; see Callon, Lascoumes, Barthes 2001).

In this study, I will evaluate the degree of innovation with regard to the following criteria: the degree of power of citizens in the process (impact on 'rules of the game' and the management of the process; decision-making competence or consultation); the level of the process (micro-local or broader); measures for increasing the participation (random selection, etc.); and the scope of influence of participants (large or restricted). With the emphasis on, for instance, the effective participation of a broad range of people, innovative participation processes differ from traditional forms of participation, like for instance neighbourhood assemblies. Neighbourhood assemblies, where participants engage in face-to-face discussions, are the modern version of the Antique polis democracy; they form an important element of Benjamin Barber's project of creating a "strong democracy" (Barber 1984). These public meetings are open to everybody, participants discuss about a particular problem, but usually no special attention is paid to the actual participation of everybody to debates, neither to the question in how far participants are representative of the wider population. The idea of the assembly is part of many innovative devices (e-town meetings, the Porto Alegre participatory budget process), but there always linked with specific mechanisms to assure an effective participation, a high quality deliberation and/or the impact on decisions.

Whilst no exact numbers are available about the quantity of these diverse, traditional and innovative, procedures – many local procedures constitute moreover adaptations and 'hybridations' between traditional and new instruments – there is no doubt that the last years have seen a spread of these processes (e.g. Blondiaux 2008; Sintomer 2007; Rosanvallon 2007; Smith 2009a). Compared to instruments like citizen juries, Agenda 21 processes or neighbourhood assemblies, PB is not as widespread. The following figures underline, however, the constant increase of examples during recent years.[9]

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[8] It is today a widely shared analysis that the participation in conventional or unconventional political action is strongly related to education, income and gender (Gaxie 1978; Niedermeyer 2001; Pattie et. al. 2005).
[9] In chapter 4, I will show that the current development of PB is oscillating between an ongoing spread of processes in certain countries (UK, Italy, Portugal) and a stagnation or even regression of experiences in others (notably France).

Figure 2: Number of PB institutions in several European countries (1993-2005)
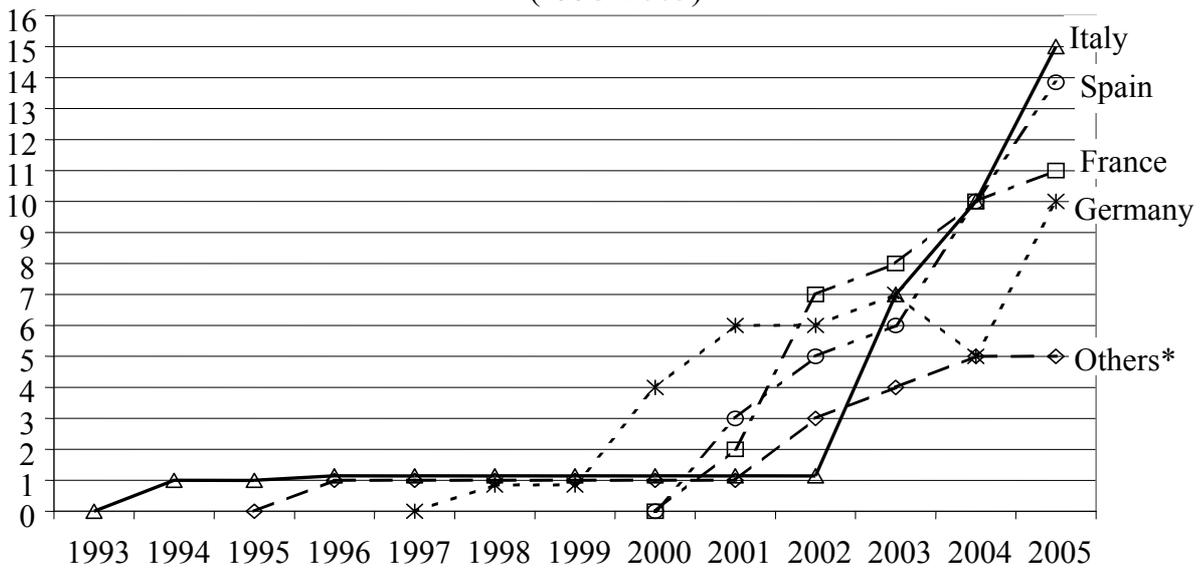
*Others = UK, Portugal, Poland

Figure 3: Spread of PB process in Europe (2000-2008)
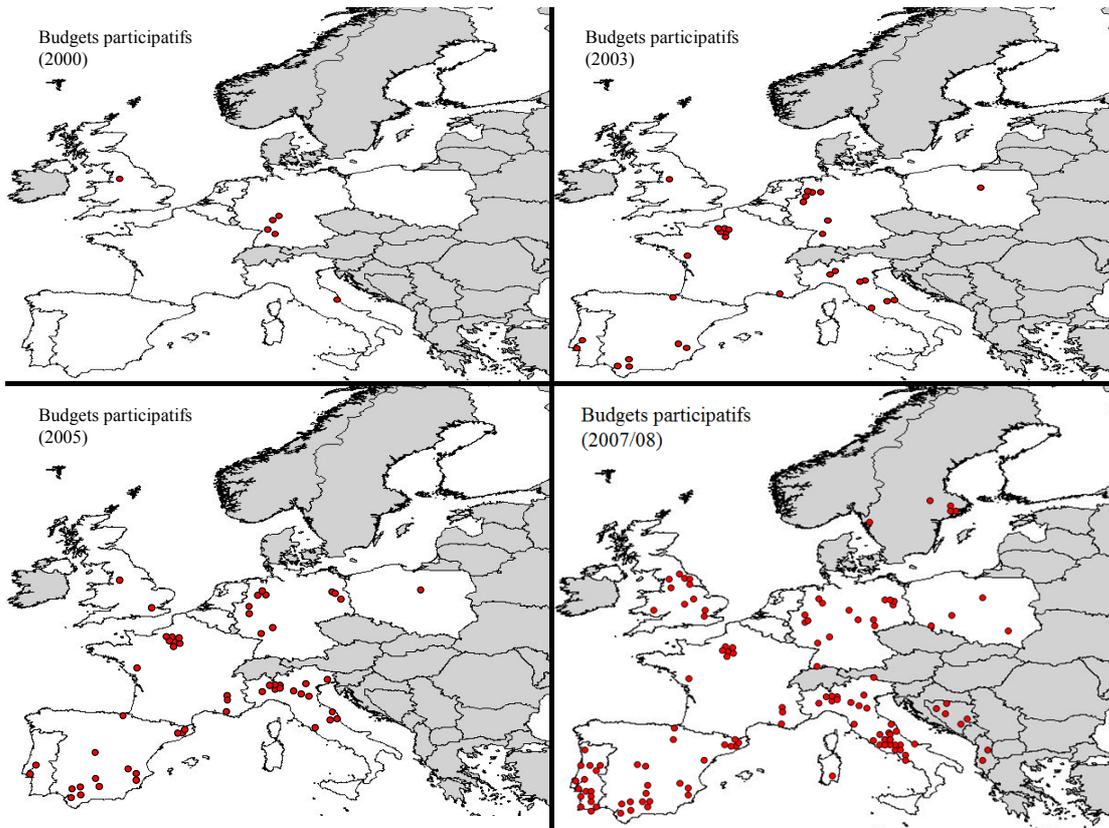
In the next chapter, the diffusion of PB and other participatory instruments will be analysed more closely with regard to the situation in France, Germany, and Great Britain. For the moment, it is important to specify the reasons and contextual conditions of this 'participatory trend'. The spread of old and new participatory instruments needs to been seen in relation to the profound political, economic and socio-cultural developments and changes that most, if not all, countries of the Western hemisphere have undergone since around 30 years.[10] One has to mention, for instance, the massive development of education, the crisis of authoritarian institutions (schools, family, parties..) and of authoritarian, centralist and bureaucratic forms of government or economic planning and development, the fight for more equal relations between men and women and the enormous technological developments (Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b: 7), namely the spread of the internet.

In addition to these broad transformation processes, three tendencies have had a more direct influence on the introduction of participatory instruments. One can mention, first, a growing legitimacy crisis, democratic "desencanto" or "malaise" of representative democracy (Offe 2003; Tocal, Montero 2006). It is characterised by factors such as the growth of populist and extreme right-wing parties, a drastic decline in voting participation,[11] as well as a simultaneous increase in political party dropouts and complaints of growing chasms between the politicians and the people. "By almost any measure, public confidence and trust in, and support for, politicians, political parties, and political institutions has eroded over the past generation" (Dalton 2004: 191).

Second, one has to mention the broad, administrative reform process carried out under the flagship of the ideas of New Public Management. It aims to increase the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of public administrations through the importation of new steering and organisation models from the economic sector. Three main reform orientations exist: internal management reforms ('flat' hierarchies, transversal cooperation, new budgetary methods, output orientation, etc.), the increased role of external competition (e.g. through public-private

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[10] These changes have also an influence in other contexts and/or continents, but probably less intensively and/or with more internal contradictions and ambivalences because of the persistence of autocratic and hierarchical (or even dictatorial) forms of government.

[11] In an ethnographic study about voting behaviour in a poor Paris suburb, Braconnier and Dormagen (2007) even analyse that "voting abstention has become the norm", whereas the world of politics appears more and more like an "esoteric spectacle" (see Le Monde, 14.2.2007). The specific situation in France, Germany and Great Britain will be presented in chapters 5 to 7.

partnerships), and a greater focus on citizens as service user or clients which are consulted through feedback/complaint mechanisms and satisfaction surveys (Reichard, Röber 2001).

The third tendency concerns the growth of social inequalities, increasing levels of unemployment and of forms of social deprivation in response to the economic squeeze of public finances and global pressures on the national and local economic systems. In an urban context, these aspects can take the form of 'problem districts' or 'pockets' of poverty where the inhabitants become more and more "disaffiliated" from the institutions and every-day life (Castel 1995).[12]

To each of these three tendencies corresponds a particular goal: political, administrative, and social (Bacqué, Rey, Sintomer 2005: 25sq.).[13] From a political perspective, participation is often presented as a "school of democracy" (Pateman 1970; Talpin 2007). Through their actual participation, ordinary citizens get to know the rules and functioning of the political sphere; they learn to develop their position and/or to elaborate common projects in interaction with others. In this perspective, participation not only leads to 'better citizens', but "empowers" people and therefore "deepens democracy" (Fung, Wright 2003a,b). It also provides politicians with more legitimacy (their decisions have a greater degree of acceptance as people were consulted before) and therefore constitute a means to fight the legitimacy crisis of representative government.

The managerial goal is based on the assumption that public services become more efficient when they are developed in close cooperation with service users (through satisfaction surveys, citizen panels, feedback charts, etc.). Users and consumers would know best their needs in everyday life, and this is why their consultation is important for delivering better services – that is those they actually want and need. This type of argument has been mainly elaborated in the New Public Management literature since around the end of the 1990s, in addition and as necessary complement to the two existing two reform orientations (internal reform and introduction of market mechanisms) (Reichard 2001). Scholars with a background in democratic theory have argued moreover that user consultation not only makes services more efficient, but that the pressure of civil society also renders the whole administrative reform

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[12] Castel (1995) uses the notion of "disaffiliation" [*désaffiliation*] in order to underline the processes, the *parcours* and origins of situations of precarity; following to him, the term exclusion is too static.
[13] Participation can also be linked to environmental aims, for example within Agenda 21 processes; or to economic goals, for example within Community Development Corporations (Bacqué 2003).

process more responsive and transparent (Bacqué, Rey, Sintomer 2005; Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b).

The third objective underlines the social dimension of participation. Civic engagement would lead to a (re-)construction of social bonds between people, increase the social capital of citizens (Putnam 1999) and establish more trust amongst people and between citizens and the political and administrative sphere. This approach lies at the centre of programmes of urban social development, such as the 'Neighbourhood Renewal' programmes in the UK (Diamond 2005), the *Politique de la Ville* in France (Sintomer, de Maillard 2007), or the 'Social City' approach in Germany (Difu 2003). In the Anglo Saxon world, this type of argumentation is usually linked to the notions of community and empowerment.[14]

The next section takes some distance to the empirical developments in the domain of citizen participation and focuses on recent developments in the literature on the topic.

II. A heterogeneous field of research

The broad field of literature about citizen participation is characterised by a gap between normative theory and empirical political analysis. This has led to a separation between studies dealing with democracy's underlying principles and those investigating citizen participation from an institutional and empirical perspective (see Smith 2009a: 9).[15] Following to Archon Fung (2007: 443), this separation represents a "segregation of thought that now poses a fundamental obstacle to progress in democratic theory". Nonetheless, a certain and increasing number of scholars have made the attempt to systematically articulate theoretic and empirical observations (e.g. Avritzer 2002; Baiochhi 2005; Fung, Wright 2003a,b; Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b; Smith 2009a; Talpin 2007). Interestingly, many of them deal directly with the process of participatory budgeting, particularly with the Brazilian one. The procedural

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[14] See chapter 6.
[15] Moreover, certain national research traditions exist. In Germany, for instance, most literature about participatory budgeting has a quite empiricist approach, because the field of 'local democracy' is dealt with in the framework of administration studies. In France, many scholars of political theory and/or political sociology work about local democracy and tend more to combining empirical research with theoretical considerations.

innovation of the Porto Alegre model seems to require a reconsideration of existing theoretical approaches.

Moreover, the scholarly literature about citizen participation is characterised by a certain cleavage between those who study 'deliberative' processes involving a limited number of randomly selected citizens (citizen juries, deliberative polls, or consensus conferences) and those who rather deal with 'participatory' procedures like participatory budgeting, which aim at a broad participation and are usually more directly linked to the sphere of decision making. Often, the guiding theoretical framework of scholars belonging to the first group is deliberative democracy, whereas that of the second group is participatory democracy.

Participatory and deliberative theories are two dominant perspectives in the field of democratic theory dealing with the (renewed) practices of citizen participation.[16] Luigi Bobbio considers the concept of participatory democracy mainly in terms of a "hot" but vague and multiform ideal, in contrast to the more precise, but "cold" and "unpolitical" idea of deliberative democracy (Bobbio 2006: 14). His analysis points to the different origins of the two perspectives: philosophical debates for the deliberative stream, political discussions and developments for the participatory orientation. The school of deliberative democracy emerged during the 1980s around the work of Jürgen Habermas. Since the "deliberative turn" of the 1990s, it has developed into a distinct, legitimate and powerful disciplinary sub-field within political sciences and political philosophy, especially in the United States (for example, Bohman, Rehg 1997; Cohen 1989; Dryzek 2000). The term of participatory democracy was initially diffused through the famous *Port Huron Statement* (1962) written by members of the "Students for a Democratic Society" (SDS) in the United States.[17] It has thereafter been linked to or reclaimed by various bottom-up participatory movements (Miller 2000; Polletta 2002) and has been formulated in terms of a democratic *theory* by authors like Pateman (1970) and McPherson (1997).

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[16] There also exists a tradition of associational theories of democracy (Cohen, Rogers 1995), but this orientation has in the last years not developed as much as the other two perspectives.

[17] Arnold Kaufman created the term "participatory democracy" in his essay "Participatory Democracy and Human Nature" (1960). Kaufman was a teacher of Tom Hayden (at Michigan University), one of the main authors of the Port Huron Statement (Miller 2000: 94). The similar phrase of "participative democracy" was created in 1949 by Sidney Lens who distinguished it from "manipulative democracy" (see ibid: 387).

Both deliberative and participatory theories of democracy are normative theories. In contrast to functionalist or elitist conceptions of democracy,[18] scholars of participatory and deliberative democracy see democracy not only as method, but as a framework for a meaningful participation of citizens based on the values of public justification, communication, transparency, and the responsiveness and accountability of political power (for example, Fung, Wright 2003a,b; Cohen 1989). Both perspectives are based, however, on a different emphasis (Sintomer 2006; Smith 2009a: 196). Whereas 'participationists' stress the benefits of a broad participation and the need to transfer decision-making competences towards citizens (Pateman 1970; McPherson 1977), 'deliberationists' focus more on the processes of public reasoning – without necessarily providing citizens with the power to take decisions (Blondiaux, Sintomer 2002 ; Habermas 1992).

For Habermas, "public reasoning" should not be institutionalised. He fears that "there may actually be circumstances under which a direct widening of the formal opportunities for participation and involvement in decision making only intensifies "generalized particularism," that is, the privileged assertion of local and group-specific special interests" (Habermas 1992: 451). By contrast, he theorises the relationship between political institutions and public reasoning in form of a constant discursive pressure:

> "Discourses do not govern. They generate a communicative power that cannot take the place of administration but can only influence it. This influence is limited to the procurement and withdrawal of legitimation. Communicative power cannot supply a substitute for the systematic inner logic of public bureaucracies. Rather, it achieves an impact on this logic 'in a siegelike manner'" (ibid: 452).

Few scholars have so far made the explicit attempt to combine participatory and deliberative (and other) theories of democracy (Baiocchi 2005; Cohen, Sabel 1997; Fung, Wright 2003a,b; Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b) or to systematically compare 'deliberative', 'participatory' and other types of instruments of civic engagement (an exception are Smith 2009a; Blondiaux

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[18] One of the most famous representatives of the functionalist or elitist orientation is Joseph Schumpeter who conceives democracy in terms of a "method" where democratically elected leaders compete for votes (Schumpeter 1942: 242). In this conception, the 'common good' is nothing other than an aggregation of individual votes; 'partisan alternation' is considered as being the democratic process, which comes closest to the ideal of self-government (Przeworski 2008).

2008; Fung, Wright 2003a,b[19]). The present study is dealing with 'participatory' processes, but is not rooted in one particular democratic theory.[20]

Many current analyses on citizen participation deal with the question of how exactly the representative framework can be amended and/or modified through the introduction of participatory practices. The perspective of Rosanvallon (2008) can be considered an intermediate position between representative democracy and deliberative democracy theories that integrates some 'participatory' considerations. He is close to Habermas in underlining the role and importance of a permanent and critical communication between society and the political sphere without transferring of real decision-making power to citizens (the reference author for this perspective is Emile Durkheim; ibid: 335[21]). Yet, his position differs in two respects. First, he stresses the explicit need to "empower"[22] the population in order to reduce political apathy and the distance between electorate and institutional sphere (ibid: 330-31). Second, he supports the setting up of "public commissions" (be it citizen juries or expert groups) which provide analyses about public needs and wishes, constitute a platform for public debates and clarify the reasons of political choices (ibid: 340). This second aspect adds an institutional dimension towards the merely "spontaneous flow of communication" (Habermas 1992: 451) of the Habermasian public sphere. It could be seen as the theoretical answer towards the propositions by Ségolène Royal during the Presidential elections of 2007 to set up citizen juries evaluating public policies (Sintomer 2007).[23]

For Rosanvallon, the "new grammar of democratic institutions" encloses aspects like the spread of participatory practices, the critique of merely hierarchical and 'expert'-based forms of government, as well as the growing emphasis on civic engagement in policy documents. For him, these developments represent a change, a "break" with regard to the "classic", party-based model of representative democracy (Rosanvallon 2008: 23).[24] He even identifies the emergence of a "new contemporary democratic order":

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[19] Talpin (2009) has started to compare ‚mini-publics' and forms of ‚empowered local democracy'.

[20] See also Smith 2009a (conclusion) on this point and the clarification of the normative assumptions of this study presented in the introduction.

[21] See footnote 20 in chapter 5.

[22] 'Empowerment' is here used in the sense of learning processes or political education and not of more radical claims.

[23] See chapter 5.

[24] With regard to the three models of representative government (or democracy) developed by Bernard Manin (1996), this corresponds to the second one. The first type is based on restricted suffrage (by census), is characterised by a leadership of notables and a central role of parliament. The second type is the regime of mass parties, which integrate large parts of the electorate into the political sphere and constitute the main centres of

> "The life of democracies goes more and more beyond the electoral-representative sphere. There exist now other, concurrent and complementary, forms of consecration as through the ballot box, which are recognised as democratically legitimate. (…) Taken together, [these two orientations] form the new contemporary democratic order" (ibid: 19; 26).

This study delivers an empirical analysis of the normative and institutional features of this supposed 'new democratic order', or of the "new spirit of democracy" identified by Blondiaux (2008). Following him, the consultation of citizens has become an obligatory part of public policies and represents a "new art of governing" (ibid: 6). It is, as if it would no longer be possible to take any decision without having consulted the public beforehand (see also Blondiaux, Sintomer 2001). Similar statements have been made by other scholars who identified a "new dominant narrative" (Talpin 2007: 69) of participation, or a "new paradigm of public administration" (Bacqué, Rey, Sintomer 2005), which is based upon the direct involvement of citizens. Very often, these changes are also represented in terms of a shift from 'government' to 'governance', meaning that horizontal and cooperative form of regulation have succeeded to vertical and hierarchical approaches (Papadopoulos, Warin 2007: 446).

These changes do affect the nature of democratic legitimacy – this is at least the hypothesis that follows from the just described changes of democratic practices. In contrast to the 'classic' model of representative democracy,

> "the legitimacy of a certain measure does no longer only depend on the nature of the authority who has taken it, but on the way it has been taken, on the procedure it has been part of" (Manin 1985, 2002; cited in Blondiaux 2005: 124).

This means that a "procedural legitimacy" would have emerged in addition to the two main forms of legitimacy of democratic institutions and processes, namely "input" and "output" legitimacy (Scharpf 1999). The empirical investigations about three participatory budget institutions will show that the combination of the input-, procedural-, and output legitimacy is difficult to realise. Moreover, the goal is not always to realise all three forms of legitimacy. Depending on the respective frame of citizen participation, or on strategic or pragmatic

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power (it is this form, which appears as 'classic' form today). The third, most recent model would be "audience democracy", marked by an increasing role of new, charismatic and media-related actors (communication specialists, journalists, etc.) and a growing power of media instead of political parties.

considerations, the organisers of a participatory process might in some cases focus more on one than on another.

This short overview about the relatively recent developments in the domain of democratic theory has given an account of the inspiration that various scholars have taken from the spread of democratic innovative institutions that initiated roughly 20 years ago, amongst which the Porto Alegre procedure plays a prominent role. The question of whether these hypotheses are 'true' will not guide the empirical research, although I will regularly touch upon issues related to these theoretical developments. I shall now turn to the specific field of literature about participatory budgeting.

III. Literature about participatory budgeting – in the search of ideas

Most studies about participatory budgeting deal with the case of Porto Alegre in Brazil. A considerable body of academic literature exists today about this main case of reference, most of the studies being written in English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish.[25]The participatory budgeting process of Porto Alegre has stimulated the search for new democratic concepts and theories I sketched out in the last pages. It has, for example, been described as a process that enables the articulation between direct and representative democracy (de Souza 1998: 42), or as a "fourth power" based on the direct participation of citizens in public matters, which exists next to the executive, legislative and judicative powers (Gret, Sintomer 2005: 132). Avritzer (2002) elaborated his new democratic theory for Latin America referring to this and other new participatory instruments, and Sintomer, together with different colleagues, has used the Porto Alegre process as reference for elaborating an ideal-

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[25] Broadly speaking, at least two types of literature about the PB process in Porto Alegre can be distinguised. A first type of literature dealing with the Brazilian procedure represents a 'critical democratic theory' approach arguing for the needs for and the conditions of a participatory democracy. Sousa-Santos (2005), for instance underlines the need for "political struggles" and argues for the reinvention of democracy, of "social emancipation" and of the social sciences. In this perspective, forms of "participatory democracy", that is other conceptions next to the "hegemonic model of democracy" have always existed and need to be explored further in order to form an alternative towards the neo-liberal model of globalisation. The analyses of the Porto Alegre case by Abers (2000), Allegretti (2003), Gret and Sintomer (2005), and Herzberg (2002) represent a second type of literature. They are also rooted in political (or normative) considerations about the need for a more participatory democracy In addition to that, however, they deliver a very detailed analysis of the functioning of the participatory process, of the urban and national context, as well as of the concrete results (on this point see also Goldfrank 2007 who uses a comparative design in order to carry out a causal analysis about the reasons of success and failure of PB processes).

type of participatory democracy (Sintomer 2001; Gret, Sintomer 2005; Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b).

Few scholars of the Porto Alegre process, however, have investigated the role of ideas, because most studies deal with the concrete outcomes or democratic theory implications of this innovative procedure. A few exceptions can however be mentioned here. Luciano Fedozzi, for instance, described and analysed the ideological discussions within the Workers' Party about the political and practical orientation of the process (Fedozzi 1997, 2000). Moreover, Baiocchi (2005) investigated the perspectives of the local community movements about the participatory budgeting process. Using an ethnographic approach, he tried to single out the "principles of vision and division" (p. 114) of local activists. Yet, he did not focus his attention on the question in how far these perspectives influenced the process development of PB, or in how far they conflicted with the ideas of members of the Workers' Party. Goldfrank, in a comparative research about several cases of PB in Latin America (2007), investigates the ideological and political debates around PB with regard to party politics (ideological battles within and between parties), but does not focus on the role of ideas in terms of frames of citizen participation.

As to the situation in Europe, the idea perspective in the literature is even less developed. This is first of all linked to the fact that the phenomenon is much younger and that the body of literature is more restricted. In addition, there does not yet exist an 'academic corpus' of books, many studies being written in the framework of master theses, Ph.D. projects, or published by foundations and NGOs. Only recently, the first comprehensive and systematic study about a large number of cases in Europe has been published (Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b). The authors of this study deal with ideas and 'frames' of citizen participation, which are defined in terms of the ideological underpinnings of idea-type models of participation (ibid: 234) and of cognitive devices orientating the perceptions of individual actors (ibid: 220-22). As this dimension of the research could not be analysed thoroughly, I decided to develop it further within the present project.

Different types of study on participatory budgeting in Europe exist. Some work on the implementation and results of this new process (Weise 2007), establish a typology of existing procedures (Ganuza 2007), relate it to questions of democratic theory (Fanesi 2004), or compare one European case to the Porto Alegre model (e.g. Blanco 2002, Kathelaar 2005,

Zimmer 2004). My investigation shares similar interests with two other studies. Talpin (2007) has analysed the ideational dimension of participatory budgeting in form of 'participatory grammars', which vary across European countries. His main focus lies, however, on these grammars in forms of implicit codes guiding the rules of interaction in public meetings and not on the origins and role of terms like participatory democracy and the citizens' commune in the implementation of PB institutions. The present study also touches upon questions dealt with by Herzberg (2008). He compares different normative models [*Leitbilder*] of public policy across European countries in his analysis of the effects of globalisation on local democracy.[26] Again, however, the main focus differs. Herzberg has himself developed a new frame of public policy, the "solidarity commune" and is less interested in the origins and diffusion of existing frames and of their role in the implementation of PB institutions.[27] The next chapter introduces the methodological framework that has guided the present investigation.

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[26] He follows the interpretation given by Jann (2002) presented in the introduction (footnote 13).

[27] Damay and Schaut (2007) use the notion of "polity" (Boltanski, Thévenot 2006) for the analysis of two Belgium participatory processes (one is a PB process). In chapter one, I explain why I decided not to work with this concept.

Chapter 3

Methodological framework

This research is designed as a qualitative and comparative case study about participatory budget institutions and frames of citizen participation. A case is "a phenomenon, or an event, chosen, conceptualised and analysed empirically as a manifestation of a broader class of phenomena or event" (Vennesson 2008: 226); much of what we know about the social world comes from case studies (ibid: 223).[1] In this piece of work, participatory budgeting is seen as manifestation of innovative forms of citizen participation that spread over the last years. More concretely, I have defined it as 'a case of' the adaptation of a foreign process to a new host culture. This process of 'casing' accompanied the whole research project and was particularly intense in the beginning and the end. In the words of Passeron and Revel, "to make a case " ["*faire cas*"] means to "consider a situation, to reconstruct its circumstances – the contexts – and to reintegrate them thereby within a story; it is this story, which accounts for the particular state of being that makes a case out of a singularity" (Passeron, Revel 2005 : 22). This case is not a natural fact, but a construction made by the researcher for the purpose of specific research interests.

In the following pages, I will specify the particular research design, the comparison of three cases in three countries, and justify the choice of the specific methods, as well as the possible problems and limitations linked to each of them in terms of theoretical considerations and the empirical research. The criteria for case selection, as well as a short overview of the selected cases, conclude this methodological chapter.

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[1] See this article by Vennesson about the potential advantages and drawbacks of case studies as social science method.

I. A comparative case study

The present study follows a case-oriented strategy that deals with a small number of cases; each case is analysed "as an interpretable whole" (Della Porta 2008: 204). Concretely, the study aims to provide an in-depth account of the adaptation of participatory budgeting processes in different European settings. This purpose is also reflected in the structure of the thesis. In order to make the description 'thick', the presentation deals with every singly case of participatory budgeting as an entity, situated within a particular context. I decided to adopt the same strategy with regard to the national context and the introduction of PB at this level. This is the reason why chapters 5 to 7 deal one after the other with the national context in Germany, France, and the UK; and chapter 8 to 10 present separately the local adaptation of participatory budget institutions.

I not simply describe the single cases, but deal with them on the basis of a conceptual framework (frames, *référentiel*) that provides a certain explanation of them ("interpretive case study") (Vennesson 2008: 227).[2] I developed the frame definition throughout the whole research project, in a constant dialogue between empirical investigation and theoretical reflection. Following the jargon of qualitative method books, this type of research belongs to the "sensitizing tradition", where the "researcher sets out with a concept that is loosely defined and then refines its meaning during the course of the research" (Blaikie 2000: 138).[3]

The "case-oriented" approach differs from a "variable-oriented" research design that usually aims at establishing statistical generalisations and causal explanations between a limited number of variables. An in-depth case study design necessitates to take into account a quite large number of characteristics linked to the single case (Della Porta 2008: 202). Passeron and Revel (2005) have underlined the need to locate cases within the broader political (and historical) context, and to 'read' and 'make sense' of singular case within this particular, local and national context.

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[2] Lofland et. al. (2006: 158) identify this type as the "'case comparative model': Identification of the configurations of present or absent conditions that account for the occurrence or non-occurrence of specified states or outcomes. The aim is to identify the necessary and sufficient conditions that account for the phenomena of interest." My approach lies between such a model and a more interpretive-contextual approach.

[3] This approach lies in between a clearly inductive approach (development of concrete topic, research questions and hypotheses 'in the field') and a purely deductive line of inquiry (theoretical assumptions taken from literature are tested empirically) (Lichterman 2002).

At the same time, my research also follows a comparative logic. I am interested in how PB processes have been adapted and set up in *different* places. The comparative dimension allows for the clarification of the role and importance of the political context and poses the question of similarities and differences across cases in relation to this context. The challenge of a comparative case study consists in carrying out a 'deep' analysis of every singly case, while comparing important features across cases. A worst case scenario is one where the researcher conducts a superficial analysis that is not comparable to other cases. In the best-case scenario, however, a detailed case description and analysis is carried out within a comparative framework, so that it is possible to draw conclusions that go beyond a single setting. This type of approach will not enable statistical generalisations, but the comparison of similarities and differences across cases allow the elaboration of hypotheses about empirical phenomena, social mechanisms or theoretical assumptions for further research.[4] More generally, a comparison has the heuristic value of enabling the researcher "to identify questions and problems that one might miss, neglect, or just not invent otherwise" (Kocka 2003: 40). In addition, it allows for the specification of the profile of a case by contrasting it with others. It also helps the researcher to be more distant to the case under investigation and thereby has a "deprovincializing, a liberating, an eye-opening effect" (ibid: 41).[5]

A comparative research implies, however, a series of practical challenges, particularly when working on cases in different countries and based on qualitative methods. First, it simply takes more time and money to carry out the empirical research in three countries than in one. In addition, the question of language comes into play. Even when the researcher speaks the language very well, the conduct of interviews in a different language is more difficult than in the native language and the researcher might not grasp all more or less 'hidden' ideas and implications of the interviewed person. Moreover, the participant observation of a meeting, where people do not speak the native language and maybe have an accent or do not articulate their ideas very well, is more difficult than observing a meeting or event in the native language. Finally, the comparison of two or more cases in different countries might imply differences in the level of knowledge about every single case and therefore can have an

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[4] In qualitative, historical (or sociological) comparison, the elaboration/specification of theories and generalisations is reached by the construction of ideal-types in the Weberian tradition (Della Porta 2008: 206).
[5] The forth, analytical purpose or function of a comparison is following to Kocka the fact that it is "indispensable for asking and answering causal questions" (Kocka 2003: 40). In social science research, causality is usually approached in statistical terms and can only be reached with large-N studies.

impact on the type of description and analysis.[6] It is important to mention these difficulties, although they do not harm the overall quality of the research when it still enables a real comparative analysis.

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that a comparison always implies a certain selection, abstraction and de-contextualisation of the case under investigation. In other words: "one compares in certain respects" (Kocka 2003: 40). The process of 'casing', as well as the comparison of cases with regard to certain respects, increases the constructed nature of the research *problématique* (even though every research implies a 'construction of reality'). The methodological rules and standards of social science research aim to assure the greatest possible validity of a research project, but one should not forget the fact that the personal 'imprint' of every researcher in terms of his or her particular viewpoints, interests and questions have an impact on the research design and thereby also on the results.

II. Qualitative methods: interviews and participant observation

Interviews and participant observation constitute the core methods for the empirical analysis in this work. Moreover, I collected and reviewed policy texts related to the process of participatory budgeting and the political context. The combination ('triangulation') of several methods is important with regard to questions of the validity of the research, because it implies the possibility to counter-check the gathered information. Moreover, the combination of different methods ("between-method-triangulation") increases the possibility of generalising the findings and/or discovering new ones (Flick 2007).

Semi-structured interviews
The conduct of interviews with actors involved in the diffusion, adaptation and/or implementation of participatory budgeting institutions has been the main instrument of empirical research in this study. I used interviews in order to gather three types of data:[7]

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[6] In my case, limitations have been for example the use of secondary data instead of own participatory observation (e.g. my British case study), or the conduct of some interviews via telephone instead of organising a face-to-face encounter.
[7] Following the perspective of the "active interviewing" developed by Holstein and Gubrium, the interview narrative is co-constructed both by the interviewer and the interviewee. This is the reason why the interviewer

biographic information about the main actors involved with participatory budgeting; their subjective perspectives on the PB process and its goals; and facts related to its implementation and functioning. I added the biographic dimension during the course of the study, because this type of information appeared as an important dimension with regard to the question why certain actors start advocating for PB. The second aspect, subjective accounts of the process, constituted the main means to go beyond the official process descriptions contained in policy documents and/or official declarations. It was important to generate a detailed or 'rich' account of the underlying goals and strategies of the involved actors, and to understand the different perspectives at stake. The factual dimension of the interview was more or less important depending on the amount of already published information.

To cover all three aspects in one interview is difficult, because they rely on very different types of narration from the side of the interviewed person, as well as in terms of the questions of the interviewer. Whereas questions related to the 'facts' of the PB process (its origins, implementation, functioning, etc.) can be very concise and specific, questions that aim at the subjective perspectives need to be more open. This is the reason why I carried out two interviews with the key actors in the three cases: one about the process itself and its political, social and/or administrative goals and impliciations; and one focusing on the personal (professional-political) background of the involved actor. Altogether, I conducted interviews with 60 people for this project (see appendix), mainly between October 2006 and February 2009.[8] The people I interviewed were either implicated in the set up or functioning of the participatory budgeting process or actively involved in its local and national diffusion (in the French case I also interviewed participants). The interview duration was about one hour to one hour and a half each. Where possible, I conducted face-to-face interviews, but travel and time constraints sometimes imposed the use of telephone interviews. In most cases, I transcribed the entire interview.

One of the main problems with regard to interviews is the reliability of the information: does the interviewed person 'really' thinks or does what he or she says?[9] Possibilities to provide

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does not simply 'collect' certain information, but "[b]oth parties to the interview are necessarily and ineluctably *active*. Meaning is not merely elicited by apt questioning, nor simply transported through respondents' replies; it is actively and communicatively assembled in the interview encounter" (Holstein, Gubrium 1999: 106, emphasis in original). I share this perspective of the 'constructed' nature of an interview.

[8] Some interviews were conducted earlier (2004) in the framework of the European research project about PB.

[9] Other methodological drawbacks of interviews concern the power asymmetry between interviewer and interviewee. The interview encounter is an asymmetrical situation, characterised by a form of "symbolic

some degree of control in this regard are for instance the comparison of the perspectives expressed during the interview with policy or other kind of documents the same person has elaborated, as well as with his or her (political) actions. The biographic narrative can be helpful in this undertaking, because it provides more information about the background of the respective person. At the same time, the same problem persists, because here like before the researcher has often no means to control for the truth-worthyness of subjective accounts. Moreover, the interviewed person might present just one particular perspective about his/her past, which in a different setting or in relation to other questions would change. These limitations need to be kept in mind and to be controlled as much as possible, although they do not reduce the general usefulness of interviews as a means to go beyond the content of official discourses and documents.

I centred the biographic interviews around the questions of the past political engagement, the most important steps in the political and professional career and the role of citizen participation in the past professional development. The process-related interview contained questions about the PB process itself (its origins, involved actors, goals, functioning, problems, challenges) as well as about the evaluation of the interviewee with regard to the process. The elaboration of certain core questions, while leaving enough space for the interviewed person to develop an own narration, is typical of semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews represent an intermediate approach between survey interviews on the one hand (a fixed set of questions that have to be asked in a pre-established order), and in-depth or open-ended interviews on the other side (an open discussion about a certain topic without any set of pre-established questions). Semi-structured interviews are sufficiently open to assess the meanings that social actors attribute to their actions and/or other social realities. They are based on a central corpus of questions and therefore assure a certain degree of comparability, even in cases where the overall 'story' of the interviewed persons is very different. There is no fixed order of the questions like in surveys, and it is possible and required to introduce follow-up questions, questions of clarification, etc. in order to encourage the interviewee to give more specific or detailed answers.

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violence": it is usually the researcher alone who determines the rules of the game and the topics of the interview and not the interviewed person (Bourdieu 1993: 905). Other scholars have underlined the impacts of the social, ethnic or age distance between interviewer and interviewee on the interview encounter (e.g. Mayer 1995: 360-61).

Although interviews constituted a central methodological tool, I did not intend to investigate deeply rooted perceptions or motivations of individual actors. The analysis of individual people involved with the adaptation of participatory budgeting in a certain place was important in order to understand the overall dynamics of its implementation, the role of frames of citizen participation in this process as well as current problems and challenges. Yet, analysing the cognitions and motivations of people would have led to a completely different research project and methodological approach. This is also the reason why I did not organise group interviews or focus groups, which give more insights into the "respondents' attitudes, priorities, language and framework of understanding" (Kitzinger 1999: 150) than a face-to-face constellation.[10]

Within the interview transcripts, the more qualitative part of the analysis (beyond the consideration of the 'facts') involved those sections that contain the subjective perspective of the interviewees about the participatory budget process. The type of analysis was hermeneutic, but I did not follow a specific research method like frame or discourse analysis, which are above all important in studies dealing with the cognitions and/or identity of interviewees.[11] As a first step, I read each interview at least twice in order to become familiar with the overall perspective of the interviewed person. I then 'coded' the text, using different colour pens, with regard to the topics I partly derived from the research questions and partly developed during the empirical research. With regard to many key actors I interviewed, I used the second interview in order to specify aspects that had been mentioned but not developed in detail during the first time, as well as to introduce the biographical dimension.

Participant observation

The second method I used was participant observation. Whilst interviews give insights into the world of subjective representations of social actors, participant observation deals with the analysis of the actual behaviour of persons and the functioning of processes. This dimension is important in order to compare the official discourses with the way the participation instrument functions and to observe for instance about how much influence citizens do

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[10] In such a setting, the role of the interviewer is less dominant and the interviewed persons play a more active part. Moreover, the group setting might generate a deeper level of discussion, as participants have to reflect upon each others arguments and to justify their positions in front of the others. For more information on focus groups see, for example, Bloor et al. (2001).

[11] Moreover, I did not use electronic devices like ATLAS/ti, which are above all necessary in the framework of large amounts of data or with regard to open-ended interviews.

dispose within the process.[12] In France and Germany, I have assisted in around 25 participatory budgeting meetings (most in the French case), whereas the British case study is based on secondary literature and sources (interviews, a DVD about the procedure, policy documents).[13] I made a written protocol of every meeting, focusing on aspects like the number of participants and their sociological characteristics (sex, ethnic background, age), the characteristics of the discussions and the different roles and types of influence of participants and organisers.

There are different intensity-levels of how to carry out a participant observation, which oscillate between an in-depth ethnographic approach and a less intensive presence of the researcher, who remains external to the observed group. In ethnographic research, the researcher not only observes what social actors do, but he tries to become part of the group and understand the (hidden) group codes (Goffman 2002: 149). In the French case, the 'High school participatory budget' in the region of Poitou-Charentes, the type of analysis goes into the direction of an ethnographic research. The main reason for this is that I did not only investigate the case as Ph.D. researcher, but that I was formally engaged to evaluate the participatory process for the regional executive (for the year 2006-07). The official evaluation work required not only a more extensive stay (all in all I spent there around six weeks), but also gave me a very different access to the people dealing with the process. I did not become 'one of them' or discovered the internal 'codes', but I got more insights to the *rationale* that lies behind the PB process. I was in daily contact with those who are in charge of the PB process, had many informal conversations with them and could also assist in some internal meetings of the administration.

Beyond the participant observation, the more direct contact with the local actors also influenced the quality of the interviews: those with the key political actors in Poitou-Charentes are 'richer' than those I carried out in Germany and Great Britain with policy actors. The local actors did not only consider me as a researcher coming from elsewhere in order to get some information, but they wanted me to understand the local situation, their particular aims and the challenges and problems of the process. In other words: my role as

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[12] Initially, I expected that debates within participatory budgeting meetings would deal more with the 'political sense' of the process or even concern the official frame of the organisers. I did not observe, however, this kind of discussions during my fieldwork. One reason could be that participants did not have a background of political activists, which is a factor that can raise the level of abstraction in public debates (Talpin 2007).
[13] I could not assist in the two organised participatory budgeting meetings.

researcher moved from that of a mere "outsider" to a sort of "insider" (Lofland et.al 2006: 41). This type of close or closer interaction with the local actors entails the danger of loosing the critical distance to the research object or of implicitly adopting the perspectives of the local actors. The comparative dimension of my study, however, as well as the analysis of this case within the large-N study about participatory budgeting in Europe (Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b) provided the necessary distance.

I analysed the other two cases (the participatory budgeting processes in the district of Lichtenberg in Berlin and in the city of Salford) with a less intensive observation of meetings and shorter local stays. Nonetheless, I know quite well the overall context in Berlin, because I have lived and studied there for many years, and because I carried out a previous empirical project about another local participatory process, citizen juries (Röcke 2005; Sintomer, Röcke 2005). Moreover, the Berlin case was also part of the European project on PB and I participated to some of the preparatory meetings and workshops for Lichtenberg. In addition, I knew some of the involved actors and therefore could get insights to 'background' type of information. The city of Salford, too, was part of the European research on PB. I have been following the developments there for many years (since 2004) during several stays (which add up to more than a month). Moreover, the close contact with a local activist provided me precious background information about the local context and the challenges of the process.

III. Selection of cases

Why did I select the 'High school participatory budget' in the French region of Poitou-Charentes and the PB processes in the district of Berlin Lichtenberg (Germany) and in the city of Salford (Great Britain)? Why did I select examples of participatory budgeting in Germany, France, and the UK? These countries are not those in Europe where the influence of Porto Alegre has been the most developed, or where it has most clearly influenced the set up of new participatory practices. In Italy and Spain, for instance, the direct influence of the Brazilian model is, or rather has been, much more present.[14]

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[14] In Italy, the European country with the highest number of participatory budgets (circa 150 examples; see Allegretti, Sintomer 2009), a sort of 'pre-PB' had been introduced in various cities already in 1944 by Aldo Capitini (1899-1968), an Italian philosopher, antifascist and educator highly influenced by the thinking of Mahatma Ghandi. It would be interesting, but goes beyond the scope of the present project, to explore the

Nevertheless, France, Germany, and the UK are interesting cases as they demonstrate the diversity of the development and practice of PB in Europe. These three countries represent each a particular political system and political culture;[15] different types of actors have been advocating for the set up of PB; and all three countries have a proper master frame with regard to citizen participation. The study therefore follows a 'most-different' design, aiming to investigate similar and distinct developments in different political contexts. Although France, Germany and Great Britain are all Western democracies and are surely not as different as a European with regard to Asian or African countries, they represent different political traditions and systems. To study these countries from the perspective of participatory budgeting institutions provides an original entry to current political trends and developments, particularly in the domain of citizen participation.

As to the first question, the selection of the three particular case studies, I already gave two pragmatic answers in the last section: the existing knowledge about the respective case and/or the surrounding local and national context, which implies also the knowledge of the language. Yet, this type of justification can only come in addition to other, more scientific arguments. With regard to case-oriented projects like the present study, the selection of cases requires most notably "an appreciation of their relevance for a specific set of hypotheses" (Della Porta 2008: 212), or at least with regard to criteria or topics of interest derived from the research question(s).

I constructed the research *problématique* in the course of the study. This is also the reason why I did not have a fixed set of questions and hypotheses in the beginning, but developed them throughout the research. From the beginning, however, I was interested in the implementation of participatory budgeting in European settings, the role of concepts like

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trajectory and mutual transfers between the Ghandian thinking, the educationist movement and the 'PB' processes organised by Capitini in various Italian cities (Ferrara, Florence, Bologna, Lucca Arezzo, Ancona…) in the framework of 'Social Orientation Centres' (*Centro di Orientamento Sociale*). During these meetings, public officers discussed with citizens about the problems and priorities of public spending.

[15] The notion of political culture is subject to various interpretations because the meanings of culture are very diverse (for example Céfai 2001, Eliasoph and Lichterman 2003, Swidler 1986). Keating, in a recent contribution (2008), defines culture as "a complex of influences that shape the conditions for rational action, explain the workings of institutions and sustain social practices across time, but which are themselves mutable and amenable to human action". Following him, culture "should be located in the inter-subjective domain and the collective levels of consciousness". *Political* culture is here understood as existing norms, symbols and practices related to the political sphere that includes, amongst others, a certain perspective on the state and on the state – civil society relationship (Almond and Verba conceive political culture in their classic study (1963) mainly as a set of psychological orientations towards the political system). Political culture and political (institutional) system are inter-related in that they mutually influence (but not determine) each other. For an overview about different approaches to political culture see for example (Lichterman, Céfai 2006).

participatory democracy, as well as the mediating actors and actor networks, particularly in the role of civil society actors. This is the reason why I selected the three cases on the basis of the two following criteria: the type of actors who initiated the PB process (policy makers or members of civil society); the presence of an official frame of citizen participation.[16] Finally, the case selection also considered the political interest of the respective process, for instance its visibility within the national borders.

The presence of a frame of citizen participation means that I deliberately selected on the 'dependant variable' and aimed to understand the role of this particular aspect in the functioning of the participatory process. In other words: I focussed on "positive cases, that is cases where the phenomenon (…) is present" (Della Porta 2008: 212). In the course of the investigation, and particularly in the work of defining and refining the conceptual framework, I noticed that the British case does not correspond to this criterion, in contrast to my previous observations. For this reason it has become a 'negative' case, which was actually very helpful to clarify the importance or relevance of single factors I had observed in the other two cases. Namely, the absence of a frame of citizen participation in relation to the set up of participatory budgeting underlined the lack of overall political support of this initiative. In the French and German case, by contrast, the initiative for introducing a participatory budget procedure came from political actors, who used it in the framework of setting out a new political programme and new political profile – which finds its expression in the frame of citizen participation.

Originally, I selected the Salford case because it is one of the first cities in the UK in which the initiative for a PB process has existed and brought on the political agenda through a local NGO, inspired by the Porto Alegre model. At the same time, this case underlines the possible difficulties of implementing a participatory budgeting process. For many years, the situation was characterised by a blockade between the perspectives of the NGO, trying to implement a Porto Alegre style process, and local policy makers aiming to involve local citizens and communities, but not to change the existing institutional framework. I chose to work about Berlin Lichtenberg because it represents the first case in Germany where the initiative for a

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[16] The territorial level of PB was no criterion, as I am not primarily interested in explaining certain outcomes or results of the process, which would necessitate a stable and comparable institutional framework. This is why it is not problematic that all three cases are situated at different territorial levels: a region, a city neighbourhood and a city district. It is necessary to consider this aspect, because it is related to the overall political context, but it has no importance *per se* with regard to the role of participation frames and mediating actors.

PB process came from civil society actors and not from policy makers. Moreover, the civil society activists introduced the Porto Alegre model in the German context, which until then was influenced by another procedural model, inspired by the city of Christchurch in New Zealand. At the same time, the process implementation was carried out in the framework of the existing master frame of citizen participation in Germany, the citizens' commune, so that an interesting combination of different procedural and ideational frameworks emerged. The PB process in Poitou-Charentes, too, has been implemented in reference to a frame of citizen participation, participatory democracy. Two of the main organisers travelled to the city of Porto Alegre and aimed to set up a politically innovative procedure of participation that breaks with existing practices. Moreover, the case was interesting as an actor of national visibility, the region's president Ségolène Royal, initiated the process; she is also the main political actor who introduced the participatory democracy frame to the French public debates.

'Equipped' with the knowledge about current trends and developments in the field of participatory budgeting, the methodological setting of the study as well as with the meaning of the concepts of frame and *référentiel*, it is now possible to investigate the empirical terrain of frames of citizen participation and participatory budget institutions in France, Germany, and Great Britain. How has PB been integrated in these countries? How has the process of adaptation been influenced by existing traditions, institutions and frames of citizen participation?

PART II

Participatory budgeting in France, Germany, Great Britain

Chapter 4

The invention and diffusion of participatory budgeting

The PB process of the city of Porto Alegre has developed over a long period marked by conflicts and debates about the scope and nature of citizen participation within the Workers' Party and amongst local civil society activists. It was brought to Europe through diverse personal and impersonal ties as well as direct and indirect channels. Unlike processes such as deliberative polls or consensus conferences, which rely upon a more or less fix set of procedural rules and partly have even been trademarked by those who invented them. European participatory budgets constitute almost always a mixture of (old and new) participatory practices set up in relation to different ideational models, personal strategies and contexts. They are never a simple copy of the Porto Alegre model, but always represent an adaptation to local conditions. Every single procedure is unique and situated within a unique political constellation.

At the same time, the observation of European cases shows that processes within several countries show similar characteristics (Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b). How is it possible to explain this situation? Do there exist 'national' models of participatory budgeting in Europe? How and who introduced the process, and how has it be evolving until today? Before dealing with these questions (which will also guide the detailed analysis in the following empirical investigations), I will first discuss the notions of diffusion and of transfer and therafter introduce the Porto Alegre model of PB and its long and conflict-riddled development. It gave rise to an original frame of citizen participation, participatory democracy, which together with the procedure of PB, has influenced and inspired the democratic imagination and practice in Europe and other parts of the world.

I. The spread of participatory budgeting: diffusion and/or transfer?

The spread of the Porto Alegre procedure to Europe can be seen as an example of diffusion or of transfer – but what is the difference between both notions? The definitions of both terms, which are often used in the framework of studies investigating the question of the convergence of policies, overlap in the political science literature (Holzinger, Jörgens, Knill 2007: 11). Broadly speaking, both deal with the spread of ideas, institutions and practices from one context to the other, and both deal above all with the process of transmission rather than its results. Following Holzinger, Jörgens, and Knill (2007: 16), most of the literature about these terms puts a different emphasis on the level of analysis and the focus of research. Whereas diffusion studies usually adopt a macro-perspective and analyse temporal or spatial clusters of national policy overtake (their special, cultural, socio-economic reasons), transfer studies follow a micro perspective and analyse the origins and mechanisms of bilateral transfer (reasons for individual transmission).

With regard to this distinction, the implementation of participatory budget processes in Europe should be analysed in terms of policy transfer, because it is strongly linked to individual actors who import the process to their own context. At the same time, the idea and practice of participatory budgeting does also spread in a more diffuse and indirect manner (through books, conferences, internet, organisations, networks), so that a perspective limited to individual transfers does not suffice.

Social movement scholars have developed a useful approach for studying the diffusion of contentious practices, based on the following four core elements: a transmitter (aiming to diffuse practices or ideas to another context); an adopter (trying to select a certain practice elsewhere for implementing it within its own context); an object of diffusion (idea, practice); and a channel of diffusion (McAdam, Rucht 1993; Soule 2004). This literature not only underlines the role of agency in diffusion processes, but also highlights the *interpretative* role of diffusion agents. No object of diffusion would "travel" without being modified at least to some extent (Snow, Benford 1999: 38). Other scholars, too, have underlined the role of "*interpreting, translating and adapting*" objects of diffusion (Roggeband 2004: 162, italics in original), and highlighted the processes of creative adoption of ideas or processes by movement actors (Whittier 2004: 534).

This perspective, as well as the literature on policy transfer (Holzinger, Jörgens, Knill 2007: 13), differs from the classic diffusion model developed for instance by Rogers (1995). It underlines the rationality and linearity of diffusion processes, which is defined as a "process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among members of a social system" (Rogers 1995: 5). This approach presumes a relationship between someone who knows (person A), and someone who doesn't (person B), as well as a fully defined object of diffusion prior to its transmission (see Freeman 2006: 370). The case of participatory budgeting, however, is but one example next to many others that underlines that the transfer or diffusion of institutions, ideas or practices does always necessitate a minimal work of re-interpretation with regard to characteristics of the new context and to the background of the 'transporting' actors.

In the present work, I mainly use the concept of diffusion, because it appears as a more encompassing term than the notion of transfer. Adapting the distinction by Sidney Tarrow (1998: 104) about different channels of diffusion,[1] I argue that the spread of PB takes place through three main channels:

- *direct diffusion* (or 'individual transfer'): a policy-maker goes to the place of origin of the object at stake (here: the city of Porto Alegre), brings the idea back to his home country and tries to set it up; or, vice versa, an actor transports an idea or process from its place of origin to a new context and implements it there;
- *mediated diffusion*: the object of innovation is diffused through individual actors or more or less informal networks or organisations; these actors need to convince policy-makers of the introduction of a PB process;
- *indirect diffusion*: the object of diffusion travels through channels like books, media and the internet.

The internet very often constitutes the first and quickest possibility for gathering information about a new procedure like the Porto Alegre model.[2] Generally speaking, the spread of

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[1] Sidney Tarrow (1998: 104) elaborated the following distinction of diffusion channels: relational (diffusion through existing personal links and networks), non-relational (diffusion through mass media and electronic communication), and mediated (the linking or "brokerage" between two hitherto unconnected sights through an actor or network) diffusion.

[2] In Berlin Lichtenberg, for instance, the organisers of the PB process got their information about Porto Alegre from the internet. With regard to Spain, Ganuza (2009) has underlined the important role of the internet with regard to the dissemination of the Porto Alegre process.

communication devices, especially of the internet, has largely contributed to the increased processes of cross-national and international policy transfer (Dolowitz, Marsh 2000) or diffusion, of which participatory budgeting is but one amongst many examples.

The spread of participatory budgeting from Porto Alegre to Europe belongs to the group of voluntary (not coercive) diffusion processes, which follows a horizontal (and not top-down) logic,[3] as its implementation is the result of the political will of single actors. They do not implement a legal or other prescription, but set up the process because of their political convictions and strategies. Using the vocabulary of social movement studies, the diffusion from Porto Alegre to Europe is a case of "reciprocation" (Snow, Benford 1999): there is a mutual interest of transmitters and adopters in the object of diffusion. The city of Porto Alegre has been actively promoting 'her' model (for instance through the European Union Urb-AL network), and interested politicians, civil servants and activists from Europe have travelled to Porto Alegre and brought the process back to their home country.

With regard to single European cases, some examples (for instance the 'High school participatory budget' in Poitou-Charentes) reflect a process of "adaptation" (or of direct diffusion), where an active adopter takes aspects of another culture and adapts it to its own culture (ibid). Other processes, by contrast, represent the dynamic of "accommodation" (ibid) (or mediated diffusion), where an active transmitter aims to introduce a foreign process to a new host culture. In the cities of Salford and Berlin, for instance, local activists brought participatory budgeting on the political agenda; they tried to convince local policy makers of introducing this process. The present study presents a detailed analysis of the concrete dynamics of both constellations, "adapatation" and "accommodation" (direct and mediated diffusion). At this point, however, the presentation continues with the original model of participatory budgeting, the process of Porto Alegre.

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[3] With regard to these distinctions, see Holzinger, Jörgens, Knill (2007: 15).

II. From 'double power' to 'participatory democracy' – the difficult development of the participatory budget process in Porto Alegre

The history and functioning of the Porto Alegre participatory budget process has already been written many times. The following presentation will not contain any radically new insights, but adopt a specific perspective in putting the emphasis on the 'ideational' dimension of its development. It focuses particularly on the ideas and frames that accompanied, influenced and were in turn influenced by the invention of this original process of citizen participation, which is deeply rooted in a particular context.

1) The political context

The invention and specific shape of the PB process in Porto Alegre is closely related to a particular national and local context (Avritzer 2005: 231-235). Brazil has undergone a series of political transformations during the last decades, especially in the democratisation process that put an end to the authoritarian regime (1988). Two aspects are particularly important with regard to the participatory budgeting experience. First, the number of local associations grew considerably during the democratisation process between the end 1970s and the mid 1980s. Second, the novel constitution of the end of the 1980s contains many participatory requirements, such as the participation of associational representatives in the elaboration of local policy programmes.

The region Rio Grande do Sul, of which Porto Alegre is the capital city, also shows a specific political configuration. It differs from the rest of the country with regard to a number of aspects[4] and has a long tradition of associational life. In the capital of this region, Porto Alegre (with around 1,3 million inhabitants), local associations have since the 1960s argued for local reforms, and the union of local associations, UAMPA, called for the right to participate in financial issues since 1986. Porto Alegre also has a traditionally stronger presence of left-wing organisations, amongst others the Workers' Party (*Partido dos*

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[4] Avritzer mentions the following points: a marginal role of slavery; the rejection of certain major power institutions during the 19th century; a higher number of small properties (instead of big ones) which favoured the emergence of more egalitarian social relations; and the reception of major parts of the European emigration towards Brazil at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century (Avritzer 2005: 233).

Trabalhadores, PT). It played a crucial role in developing the participatory budgeting process, as well as of other participatory instruments.

The PT was created in 1980 (after the mass strikes of 1979) and legally recognised in 1982. The party represents a break with the country's 'old left', especially the Brazilian Labour Party. It had been created by elite groups from within the military and intelligentsia and was based on hierarchical organisational structures. The PT instead involves a strong, relatively autonomous, grassroots base and has promoted from the outset a more bottom-up participatory party structure (Abers 2000: 48).

The party calls itself a 'mass-based socialist party', but is made of an "ideological rainbow" (Baiocchi 2003: 2) containing very different factions and sub-groups. The party has a triple ideological and organisational origin. First, the trade unionist movement where the Brazilian President Lula da Silva as well as the first PT mayor of Porto Alegre, Olívo Dutra, stem from. Second, radical left-wing tendencies (non-orthodox Trotskyite, Guevara and Maoist groups), which are critical of Stalinism and oriented towards democratic principles such as democratic pluralism. Third, Christian Base Communities as well as, more generally, Christian movements influenced by liberation theology (Gret, Sintomer 2005: 15). Liberation theology is an interpretation of the Christian religion aiming to change power relations for the benefit of the poor instead of helping them without changing the existing framework. According to liberation theology, the church should be rebuilt from its grassroots and the Bible should be approached not only in theological terms but also in its sociological aspects, which was translated into a reinterpretation of Marxism in the light of Christian precepts.

Before the critical elections of 1988 and 1989, when the PT registered important electoral victories,[5] there was a general commitment in the party to democracy and grass-root participation, as well as to the 'inversion of priorities', i.e. a profound redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor. There was no agreement, however, about how to put these principles into practice. Many PT militants supported the idea of citizen councils (*conselhos populares*), but how they would be created and how much power they should have remained unclear. Three competing perspectives existed throughout the 1980s:

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[5] In 1988, 35 municipalities throughout Brazil voted for a PT mayor, amongst which three regional capitals, Porto Alegre, Vitória and Sao Paulo.

> "Some saw them as parallel structures of power outside the state, similar to the original idea of the Soviets. From this perspective, the government should not take part in the creation of the councils, which should evolve out of the autonomous organising of society. Others argued that the conselhos should be initiated by the government and used principally as a way to democratise the decision making process. According to a third, middle-ground view, the government should participate in promoting the conselhos, but with the primary objective of strengthening civil society so that the latter would have, at a future date, the capacity to transform state institutions" (see Abers 2000: 51-52).

The electoral programme of the candidate for the Porto Alegre elections of 1988, Oivio Dutra, was based on the first perspective, which finds its expression in the 'dual' or 'double power' frame. His strategy aimed at gaining control over capitalism and the state, with the ultimate goal of its overthrow (Abers 2000: 67; Goldfrank 2003: 30). Once in office, however, the radical dual-power conception of the mayor underwent a "reality shock" (Abers 2000: 67). Gradually, the radical visions of the early times were considered as being disconnected from reality and obstructive (Fedozzi 2009). Little by little, an alternative perspective emerged amongst leading PT political circles and community activitsts. Instead of pursueing the aim of a double power, they envisioned the participation process in terms of a "representative democracy *combined* with the direct and voluntary participation of citizens" (de Souza 1998: 42, italics added).[6]

> "The project is to radically democratise the current State in order to create another state with two spaces of decision, which are combined and contradictory: one space of decision stemming from political representation, which already exists; and another space of decision, stemming from a new public sphere, which is based on the direct presence of civil society organisations and combined with mechanisms of universal consultation like referendums and plebiscites. In these conditions, the representative state will carry out its political programmes with the help of a new democratic dynamic, which integrates all those to public life who wish to participate, and particularly those sectors of society that have no other means to assert their rights" (Genro 2001: 36).

This perspective then found its expression in the concept of participatory democracy, an original frame of citizen participation that influenced thereafter various actors in Europe and other places in the world. The term itself was not new, as it had been put on the political agenda by the American 'Students for a Democratic Society' thirty years earlier. Yet, the theoretical and practical development of the term in Porto Alegre is very original. Moreover,

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[6] The most radical factions within the PT process criticise this 'reformist' way of functioning as 'ameliorating neoliberalism'.

the Porto Alegre example favoured the renewed spread of this notion, which after its high point during the mid-late 1960s had 'hibernated' in books of democratic theory.

2) The participatory democracy frame in Porto Alegre

The shift from double power to participatory democracy in Porto Alegre was the result of a continuous, pragmatic and conflict-riddled learning process based on practical experience (the attempt to put a radical participatory process into practice).[7] The very idea of a more participatory democracy emerged progressively as combination of existing ('popular participation'; 'inversion of priorities') and new perspectives, before some of the key political actors started to formulate it in a more systematic manner. Some referred to it directly (Pont 2000), other described their radical political project in similar terms (Genro 1998; 2001; de Souza 1998). The following analyses uses the criteria of frame operationalisation developed in chapter 1 (diagnosis, prognosis, goals, ideological foundation, key features of citizen participation).

The definition of participatory democracy by the authors just mentioned, which for reasons of simplicity I simply refer to in terms of 'Porto Alegre' participatory democracy frame,[8] has a radical political and social component. It aims at the control of the state through its citizens and combines this claim with a strong social agenda, namely an "inversion of priorities" in favour of the poor population. It is particularly the social dimension, together with the attention to the procedural quality, which is new in relation to the 'spontaneous' interpretations of participatory democracy predominant during the 1960s and 70s.[9]

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[7] Initial plans foresaw the organisation of a participatory process in the field of transport. This project failed and only thereafter the idea of organising a 'participatory budget' came into play – without, however, "any consensus within the party over how, or even whether, it should be implemented" (Goldfrank 2003: 31).

[8] See Sintomer (2001: 183-191) with regard to the conflicts about the meaning of participatory democracy within the Workers' Party in Porto Alegre.

[9] Since the beginning, the notion of participatory democracy has been ambiguous. Whereas the members of SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) shared a "broad consensus" about the value of participatory democracy and the need to fight against political apathy, at least two perspectives can be distinguished in the document: the vision of a face-to-face community, rooted in the American tradition of town meetings and the thinking of C. Wright Mills; and the need for more experimental, collective and direct action, rooted in a combination of existentialism, pragmatism and modernism (Miller 2000: 146-48).

The authors base their quest for a more participatory democracy on the analysis of four problematic issues.[10] At the most abstract level, they criticise the structural distance between elected representatives and ordinary citizens within the system of representative democracy (Pont 2000: 84). Moreover, the current situation would be characterised by the fact that the "privileged classes" participate much more in the electoral system than the broad mass of people (Genro 1998: 21). Second, they criticise the overall dominance of neo-liberal thinking and actions; they would "subjugate the state to the directives of financial capital" and lead to societies characterised by an "over-concentration of richness in the hands of few people" (ibid: 21). This policy orientation would be, third, of particular negative consequences in a state like Brazil, where the political elite is corrupt and unable (or unwilling) to develop efficient policy programmes to fight against the important social problems (unemployment, violence, etc.) in the country (ibid: 18). This overall analysis is finally completed by a critique of the revolutionary experiences and examples of state socialism that have been taken place so far. In their perspective, they did neither ameliorate the state functioning, nor deepen democracy and political participation, but rather lead to a new, dictatorial regime (ibid: 23).

With regard to this situation, the central challenge is the question of "how to radically democratise democracy" (ibid: 21). In this perspective, direct participation increases the political capacities of citizens[11] and reduces the dominance of the state. The concrete aims are to create new institutions and a new state organisation where decisions are made for the welfare and in respect of all people; where a new, non state public sphere emerges that allows for "a social control of the state" (de Souza 1998: 42);[12] where the direct involvement of citizens (coming from the working class and the overall civil society) leads to an "inversion of priorities" and a "bom governo", that is an efficient and effective public administration; where conflicts between different perspectives are transformed in a consensus about political choices (Genro 1998: 22); where the direct participation of citizen is part of an overall fight against neo-liberal thinking and the weakening of state through the dominance of private interests (Pont 2000: 146).

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[10] It might be that not every author mentions every single aspect, but taken together their analysis forms a coherent ensemble, presented also by Sintomer (2001: 184-191).

[11] The combination and mutual enhancement of direct action and learning is what Paulo Freire (2007) calls *conscienticaçao* and what generally is referred to in terms of 'empowerment'.

[12] Genro (1998: 42) expresses the same idea when he aims at a situation where "society controls the state".

A process like participatory budgeting, based on the direct and broad involvement of citizens in the allocation of public funds and criteria of social justice, represents one concrete measure of this overall, political agenda. Here, the citizen becomes again an "active protagonist" in the local, political life and of public administration (de Souza 1998: 41). Against populist forms of engagement, which are characterised by the absence of clear rules (and a passive and merely consultative involvement of citizens by the 'leaders'), the existence of explicit procedural regulations is very important in such a new democratic process. These rules allow a "democratic organisation of the debate" (Genro 1998: 34) and ensure the effective and equal engagement of all participants. They are, and should be, elaborated by the participants themselves (not by the authorities) in form of a "self-regulation" (de Souza 1998: 43). All in all, however, the process should remain flexible, in "continuous movement" in order to adapt it to new context patterns (Genro 1998: 18).

This process is open to all voluntary citizens and consists of a pyramid-like structure with local public assemblies and elected citizens' representatives bound to the basis through an imperative mandate; they are therefore subject to direct assessment (de Souza 1998: 56). This is the reason why a process like participatory budgeting not only differs from the "narrowness and limits of representative democracy", but also from a "'pure council system [*conseillisme*[13]*], a non regulated system where the most clever and smartest people take advantages with regard to the others, as well as from 'traditional populism', which is fundamentally consultative" (ibid: 33).

These propositions, which are inspired by a post-authoritarian (and libertarian) interpretation of socialism, are aimed at leading to the formation of a "new type of citizenship", one that is active, participatory, critical and independent (Genro 1998: 19). The overall goal is to create a 'school of democracy' through direct participation.[14] The set up of participatory structures is intended to strengthen representative institutions and the state, not to overthrow them (de Souza 1998: 42). Yet, this implies a profound modification of existing structures and institutions, and particularly the creation of "two centres of democratic power: one that emerges form the vote, and the other one which comes from direct institutions of participation" (Genro 1998: 22). This emphasis on the combination of the direct participation

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[13] The author means a democracy that is solely based on a bottom-up council system like the Paris Commune or the Soviets.
[14] See also de Souza (1998: 44) on this point.

of citizens with representative institutions is the particular, institutional feature of the participatory democracy frame in Porto Alegre. It distinguishes it from many other frames of citizen participation, such as Jean-Pierre Raffarin's frame of proximity (chapter 5) and the different frames of the citizens' commune in Germany (chapter 7). The following table summarises the main aspects of the Porto Alegre participatory democracy frame.

Table 1: 'Participatory democracy' frame in Porto Alegre

'Participatory democracy' frame	
Developed by	Tarso Genro (1998, 2001) , Ubiratan de Souza (1998), Raol Pont (2000)
Ideological foundation	Post-authoritarian forms of Socialism
Diagnosis	- Structural distance between elected representatives and citizens - Dominance of wealthy classes in representative system - Dominance of neo-liberal thinking and actions - Corruption and weakness of Brazilian state - Failure of revolutionary experiences so far
Prognosis	- Create new, democratic public sphere where citizens participate directly - Social control of the state - Transform the state in that it becomes based on two centres of power: the vote, and the direct participation of citizens
Goals	- Increasing direct citizen participation - Creation of new forms of democratic and critical citizenship - Strengthening of representative democracy and enhancing efficiency and effectiveness of public administration - Fight against neo-liberal dominance in thinking and governing - More social justice: 'inversion of priorities'
Key features of participatory process	- Existence of procedural rules that assure effective and equal participation of all - Overall fluidity of process - Self-regulation through participants - Broad bottom-up participation - Open accessibility, 'imperative mandate' for citizens' representatives

3) The development of an innovative process

This perspective on participatory democracy emerged during the period implementation of the participatory budgeting process. Since roughly the mid-1990s, the PB process was stabilised in a format that would remain relatively stable for nearly a decade. In this period, participatory democracy constituted the main (secotral) *référentiel* of public policies in Porto

Alegre with regard to the definition and spending of the investment budget. Moreover, it was a *référentiel*, which seemingly not only influenced the limited circle of policy makers, but also a quite high number of active participants to the process, because they had played a strong role for the initial and continuous process development and implementation. Scholars have even analysed the change of the political culture of civil society activists in Porto Alegre as a result of the year-long participation in this procedure (Fedozzi 2009).[15] The exact timing and relation between the process and the idea of participatory democracy (as well as diverging tendencies and developments) should be analysed in detail, which is why the interpretation in terms of a *référentiel* constitutes a hypothesis more than a carefully analysed statement. Yet, for the present purpose of providing a background portrait of the original PB model it is sufficient to leave the analysis at this point.

The development of the participatory budget process took several years and went through different phases. Three broad periods can be distinguished. There was a first tumultuous period, characterised by an ongoing search for a new and radical participatory instrument. Second, a period of consolidation of the process, which is the one widely referred to in the literature; and a third period since the 2004 elections, which brought an end to the government of the Workers' Party and, though maintaining the formal structure, puts the PB process in relation to more managerial ideas and processes.

The first meetings of the new procedure were rather chaotic and participants as well as party activists and civil servants were disappointed with its poor results. Thereafter, three central reforms enabled an amelioration of the process. First, the city set up a budget and planning office, Gaplan, for managing the technical aspects of the process and to link the PB process with administrative departments. Second, fiscal reforms enhanced the financial situation of the city and consequently its possibilities for responding to demands formulated within the participatory process. Third, the creation of 16 instead of five urban areas allowed the organisation of local assemblies closer to the daily life of residents. In addition, the community movement continuously asked for a procedure with an important role for citizens in the process, especially with regard to the question which neighbourhoods should receive more public funding and in which thematic areas.

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[15] Following Fedozzi, it takes at least eight years of participation for the formation of a new "social consciousness".

During PT's second office with Tarso Genro serving as mayor (1993-96), the process was reformed further.[16] Thematic assemblies were introduced in addition to the district forums, and a rule book was written which made the process more transparent and identified the rights and responsibilities of all involved actors. This process can be illustrated on the basis of three basic principles.[17]

1. The first principle, grassroots democracy, is carried into effect via citizens' assemblies in the 16 districts of the city. The aim of these assemblies is to determine priorities and to elect delegates and representatives who follow up on the development of the suggestions. In addition to investments, political guidelines for the design of municipal policies are discussed, such as for the areas education, health, and culture. Priorities are elected on the basis of the principle 'one man one vote'.

2. Social justice, the second principle, is realised via an allocation formula. The funds which are at disposal in each of the investment areas are distributed among the districts while taking into consideration the number of residents, the quality of the infrastructure available as well as the local list of priorities. These three criteria ensure e.g. that districts with a lacking infrastructure receive more funds than areas with a high quality of life.

3. Citizen control, the third principle, is realised by means of boards, such as the Council of the Participatory budget, which convenes once a week for two hours. Its members are elected during the basic assemblies of the districts. It is their duty to ensure that the priorities of the districts are taken up in the budget to the largest extent possible. Independent NGOs train the representatives of the participatory budget in order to enable them to co-plan with the administration. In addition, the Council of the participatory budget is implicated in the allocation of public contracts.

This process was consolidated around the mid-90s and would keep this rough shape until 2004, when the mayor (Raul Pont) lost the elections against a coalition of all other parties. The new conservative government, advised by the World Bank, has maintained the structure of the PB process. At the same time, it has linked it to new ideas, namely the concept of

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[16] By 1993, "participatory programmes had become standard prescription for PT administrations, and PB reforms were adopted in almost every PT administration from that time onward" (Goldfrank 2003: 23).

[17] This presentation is taken from Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008a: 167. Raul Pont, mayor of Porto Alegre between 1997 and 2004, describes the process with regard to the following three principles: "popular participation" ('popular' in the sense of a broad bottom-up mobilisation); "direct practice" (direct interaction in the meetings and control. of the process); and "self-regulation" (Pont 2000: 74-75).

"Local Solidarity Governance" (ibid), which involves the idea to enlarge the process to new actors and organisations (private business, foundations, churches, etc.). Could the procedure lose its 'participatory spirit' and impact on social justice by turning into a process of Public Private Partnership (Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b)? Will Porto Alegre lose the leadership of the alter-globalist movement? Already before the 2004 election, a number of problems within the PB process occurred, which are likely to persist.[18] The future development of the Porto Alegre process is therefore open and will continue to evolve. In Europe, too, the development of participatory budgeting has undergone some changes since its introduction at the end of the 1990s. The following section will provide a general picture of this development.

III. Participatory budgeting in Europe: an overview

Is there any resemblance between the Porto Alegre model and the way participatory budgeting has been implemented in Europe? Is it at all possible to transfer such a complex and deeply embedded procedure to a different context? As research has shown, participatory budgeting in Europe is a multiple phenomenon that varies greatly across cities, regions and national boarders (Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b). There does not exist anything like 'the' PB in Europe, although certain criteria have been established in order to distinguish participatory budget from other procedures of citizen engagement (ibid).

- European participatory budgeting deals with financial and/or budgetary issues;
- the city level has to be involved, or a (decentralized) district with an elected body and some power over administration;
- it has to be a repeated process;
- it must include some form of public deliberation within the framework of specific meetings/forums;
- there needs to be some accountability on the output.

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[18] A growing financial crisis made the implementation of projects increasingly difficult; the Workers' Party was weakened by internal ideological battles, especially after the victory of Ignazio (Lula) da Silva 2002 as Brazilian President; parts of the political personnel left in order to occupy national positions (Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b). These problems are reflected in a decreasing level of participation: from the peak number of 33,600 people in 2002 to 11,500 four years later, which represents the level of 1994 (Fedozzi 2009).

These criteria constitute a good point of orientation, but can be legitimately changed in different research projects. Two of my cases (Poitou-Charentes, Salford) do not respect the second criterion. Yet, I still consider them as a 'valid' object of research because they fulfil all other criteria[19] and are considered as participatory budget institution by the local actors. In my research, this aspect was important for having a clear and commonly shared topic of discussion in the interviews with the local actors.

More than 10 years have past since the introduction of the first participatory budget institutions in Europe. The number of examples has grown considerably over the last few years, passing from a small number of examples at the end of the 1990s to more than 150 in 2009.[20] A new period seems to have started, which is characterised by a looser connection to the Porto Alegre model and an increasing process of institutionalisation and combination with existing local practices of participation. In Italy and the UK, particularly, the institutionalisation process is obvious; it is characterised by a simultaneous, massive spread of processes and the 'de-radicalisation' of processes and discourses (Allegretti, Sintomer 2009). Moreover, the procedure is no longer a predominantly leftwing phenomenon as in the first years (although Germany and the UK have since the beginning constituted exceptions in this regard). In Spain, for instance, the country where the influence of Porto Alegre has been the most direct, 15% of processes have in recent years been launched by conservative governments (Ganuza 2009). In addition, the process has also spread to more countries, where new organisations promote it with regard to their political agenda (e.g. the World Bank in Albania; the UN in Poland).[21] In France, too, the situation has changed and is oscillating between one very far-reaching example, the 'High school participatory budget' (chapter 8) and the stagnation or even regression of examples in the rest of the country.

The development that has taken place so far does not point to a convergence of processes, but rather to a development of particular 'national' PB models – national not in the sense of deeply rooted cultural and political specificities, but of a type of process that is widespread within the national borders. The situation could change if international organisations become more actively involved in certain countries and promote a specific process model across

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[19] Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke (2008b: 37) do also underline the fact that single processes can be more or less close to these criteria.

[20] See figures 1 and 2 in chapter 2.

[21] So far, no studies have been published that deal in detail with the development of PB in these 'new' countries.

borders (Dolowitz, Marsh 2000). So far, such a development has not taken place, at least not at a large scale.

Whereas the exact contours and tendencies of this recent development are still quite blurry, several general observations have been made (Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b). For instance, the past introduction of this procedure has been neither related to particular urban contexts (old or new, rich or poor cities) nor the (high or low) degree of political legitimacy of the local and/or national political system. Moreover, no single, institutional development towards a greater citizen orientation can account for its introduction in Europe. Instead, *agency* has until now been the most important factor for explaining the spread PB (ibid: 46). Several types of (collective) actors can be distinguished:

1) Political parties, particularly members of left wing political parties (communist and post-communist parties, later on Social Democratic or Socialist parties), who introduce a PB process in 'their' municipality (particularly in France, Italy, Spain, Belgium); a more recent and limited role of green and conservative parties;

2) Social movements and local associations (particularly in Italy and Spain; partly and more recently in Germany);

3) International organisations (international organisations in Albania and some states of former Yugoslawia);

4) Non-governmental organisations (particularly in the UK);

5) Participation 'professionals' like civil servants and politicians specialised in participation; external consultants; engaged researchers (nearly everywhere)

6) National or international networks or foundations aiming to promote the diffusion and/or implementation of PB (foundations in Germany; networks in Italy, Spain, UK)

In Europe, the implementation of participatory budgeting is typically the result of an initiative taken by an individual, committed actor, for example a mayor. The UK is so far the only country where a "national strategy" for the introduction of this process exists (Communities and Local Government 2008; Röcke 2010). Yet, the diffusion of the idea and practice of PB passes through diverse networks and organisations. In several countries such networks exist, which are, for instance, led by territorial entities (municipalities, regions) like the network

'Nuovo Municipio' in Italy or the network 'Keleidos' in Spain (Ganuza 2009).[22] In Germany, a group of foundations linked to the importation of the New Management reform agenda have played an important role for the diffusion of PB, whereas in Portugal this role has been taken over by a research centre of the University Coimbra, the *Centro de Estudos Sociais* (Allegretti, Sintomer 2009). In Great Britain, a network of civil society activists and single policy makers and consultants was created, which today is even the official government partner for the implementation of the "national strategy" of participatory budgeting.

At the international level, too, different networks exist. One could consider them as one broad "issue network" (Heclo 1980)[23] of participatory budgeting, although the heuristic value of such an encompassing approach is not very high. Instead, it is more fruitful to consider the variety of actors and networks, who are involved at different levels. With regard to the international level, organisations like the World Bank and the UN (especially via its UN-Habitat programme) have already been mentioned. Moreover, the horizontal European-Latin American exchange programme Urb-AL, initiated in 2003 by the European Union and led by the city of Porto Alegre, plays an important role. Finally, there is a loose, cross-country network of engaged citizens, political activists, associations, organisations, and researchers. They meet at venues such as national or international conferences or meetings of the (European or World) Social Forums. Some of them are working as formal or informal consultants in their home countries or have carried out consultancies in other countries.[24] Others are simply politically active or carry out their research about the issue and participate to the ongoing research and debate about the topic. There are no common activities involving all members of the network.

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[22] Such a network has also been established by three European regions: Poitou-Charentes, Catalonia and Toscany. They are exchanging ideas and practices about particiaption and have also initiated common participatory processes.

[23] "Issue networks (...) comprise a large number of participants with quite variable degrees of mutual commitment or of dependence on others in their environment; in fact it is almost impossible to say where a network leaves off and its environment begins. (...) Participants move in and out of the networks constantly. Rather than groups united in dominance over a programme, no one, as far as one can tell, is in control of the policies and issues. (...) Issue networks operate at many levels. (...) Powerful interests groups can be found represented in networks but so too can individuals in or out of government who have a reputation for being knowledgeable. Particular professions may be prominent, but the true experts in the networks are those who are issue-skilled (that is, well informed about the ins and outs of a particular policy debate) regardless of formal professional training. More than mere technical experts, network people are policy activists who know each other through the issues." (Heclo 1980: 102-03).

[24] These are for instance Giovanni Allegretti in Italy (Portugal and Sweden); Carsten Herzberg in Germany; Yves Sintomer in France; Tomas Villassante in Spain.

With regard to the procedures of PB, no direct link between the type of advocacy actor and process design can be observed. The creation of a particular PB process has rather to be understood as a combination of factors like actor-related strategies and goals, existing participatory practices and new or existing frames of citizen participation – to mention just a few factors that will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapters. In order to provide a conceptual map that helps to identify some broad characteristics of PB processes in Europe, six ideal-type models have been elaborated (Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b). They are 'Porto Alegre adapted for Europe'; 'Participation of organised interests'; 'Community funds on local and city level'; 'The public/private negotiation table'; 'Proximity participation'; and 'Consultation on public finances'. They vary with regard to four main criteria: the origins of the procedure (a link to existing structures or a completely new process); the organisation form of meetings (thematic and/or territorial; restricted number of participants or open access; etc.); the type of discussions (content of discussions; project-based discussion or discussion about general orientations of public policy, etc.); and the role and nature of civil society (type of participating citizens; role with regard to the procedural rules, etc.). The six models are summarised on the following table.

Table 2: Procedural models of PB in Europe

	1. Porto Alegre adapted to Europe	2. Proximity participation	3. Consultation on public finance	4. Public/private negotiating table	5. Community funds at neighbourhood and city level	6. Participation of organised interests
Origins	- Adaptation of the POA model; in Europe break with existing traditions - A standardised procedure in the alterglobalist movement	- Neighbourhood councils, neighbourhood funds, proximity management, extension to town level - Not very standardised procedure	- Public services reform in Christchurch (New Zealand), participatory versions of NPM, strategic planning - A procedure standardised by foundations	- Participatory version of public/private partnerships - A certain degree of standardisation through international organisations	- Community development projects and empowerment (in the framework of general urban regeneration policies) - A certain standardisation due to NGOs	- Local neo-corporatist projects, Agenda 21s, participatory strategic planning, participatory procedures for local NGOs - A certain standardisation due to international organisations
Organisation of meetings	- Open meetings at neighbourhood level, delegates at town level - Participatory cycle	- Open meetings at neighbourhood and town level - Participatory cycle	- Open meetings (or meetings with randomly selected citizens) at town level - Frequently no participatory cycle	- Closed meetings at town level - Not necessarily a participatory cycle	- Different kinds of meetings at neighbourhood level, delegates at town level - Not necessarily a participatory cycle	- Closed meetings at town level - Not necessarily a participatory cycle
Deliberation	- Discussion centred on public investments - Projects ranked according to criteria of distributive justice, formalised rules - Good quality deliberation	- Discussion centred on micro-local public investments or broad guidelines of town policy - No ranking of investments or actions, informal rules - Average to weak quality deliberation	- Discussion centred on overall budget or offer of services - No ranking of services, possible ranking of priorities, rather informal rules - Poor quality deliberation	- Discussion centred on concrete projects financed by public/private partnerships - Projects ranked, formal rules - Good to average quality deliberation	- Discussion centred on concrete community projects - Projects ranked, formal rules - Good to average quality deliberation	- Discussion centred on sectoral themes of public policies and possibly on specific projects - Flexible ranking of major guidelines, rules not necessarily formalised - Variable quality deliberation
Civil society	- Particularly active citizens (or organised groups) - Civil society has genuine procedural autonomy - Decision-making powers	- Particularly active citizens (or organised groups) - Civil society has little procedural autonomy - Consultative role	- Active or ordinary citizens (randomly selected) - Civil society has little procedural autonomy - Consultative role	- Organised citizens together with private enterprises - Civil society has little procedural autonomy - Decision-making powers	- Especially organised citizens - Civil society has genuine procedural autonomy - Decision-making powers	- Organised citizens together with local institutions and employers' unions - Very variable degree of autonomy for civil society - Variable powers
Where?	Influence particularly strong in Spain and Italy	Dominant influence in France, Portugal, Belgium (Italiy)	Dominant influence in Germany	Influence in Poland	Influence especially in UK	Especially in Spain

Source: Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b.

The aspect 'civil society', and particularly the question of the procedural autonomy of participants, is part of the criteria I use to evaluate the degree of innovation of participatory budget institutions in France, Germany, and Great Britain. The table also indicates the countries in which the respective model is most widespread (or rather: where existing procedures come close to the ideal-type, which does never exist as such in practice). In Germany, for instance, many, if not most examples come close to the type "consultation on public finances"; in Spain, the process of participatory budgeting does always imply a direct participation of citizens at the decision-making process for the spending of municipal budgets (Ganuza 2009) and most models are close to the "Porto Alegre in Europe" ideal-type. How is it possible to explain the prevalence of certain procedural features within (certain) national borders – although, of course, every single process has particular features and characteristics?

Sintomer, Herzberg, and Röcke (2008b) argue that the origins of participatory budgeting are particularly important with regard to the procedural shape it takes, as well as the work of standardisation through related networks or organisations. In Germany and the UK (as well as in Italy in Spain), these networks have constituted even a central place for the communication and debate about ongoing processes and developments of PB. Although they usually have contacts to other networks or engaged actors in other countries, the networks deal predominantly with national developments and issues. Through publications, meetings and conferences, they diffuse 'good practice' models within the national borders, which consequently will constitute a model for other interested cities. For instance, foundations in Germany and a non-governmental organisation in the UK have elaborated 'tool-boxes' about how to initiate a PB process, disseminated in form of publications (Bertelsmann Stiftung et. al 2001; PB Unit 2008a,b), available also via internet. Such publications have played an important role for the diffusion of certain procedures that became typical within the national framework – and thereby different from processes in other countries. I do not speak here of deeply-rooted national characteristics, but simply point to the fact that a certain type of process is more common that other types. In Spain, the existence of specific master classes in several universities has played a crucial role for the diffusion of a particular type of practice of participatory budgeting (Ganuza 2009).

The existence of a certain number of typical cases does not exclude, of course, the simultaneous existence of other types of processes. Moreover, certain procedural features are shared across borders, like small funds given to local groups of citizens or the consultation

about the city-wide budget. In addition, one has to consider that procedures change over time, which might modify the overall 'configuration' of PB processes within a country. Finally, there do exist many cross-national processes of transfer, most often through the "brokerage" activity of individual actors who link two formerly unconnected sites (Tarrow 1998: 104).[25]

Networks related to participatory budgeting exist in France, Italy, Spain, the UK and Germany. In France, however, the situation is different. The network "Démocratiser radicalement la démocratie" has played a quite important role for the diffusion of the Porto Alegre model within the national borders. Yet, it neither engaged a process of pragmatic process evaluation and policy learning on the basis of existing procedures (UK), nor elaborated concrete proposals for the procedural shape of PB (Germany, UK). This could be one reason why participatory budget processes in France seem to represent a greater procedural diversity than in countries like Germany and the UK. Examples relate to the 'proximity democracy', 'consultation of public finances', and 'Porto Alegre' ideal types of PB,[26] even though the underlying socio-political dynamics of most processes are quite similar (chapter 5).

Conclusion

The Porto Alegre model clearly belongs to the group of innovative participatory devices that have emerged over the last years. It is based on a complex structure and has led to considerable results in terms of bottom-up participation, social justice and administrative reform. Together with the 'old-new' frame of citizen participation that was developed or re-interpreted in Porto Alegre, participatory democracy, this procedure has constituted an important source of inspiration for scholars and practitioners of other countries. The idea and practice of Porto Alegre has 'travelled' to Europe through various channels of personal and impersonal diffusion and has been adapted to and mixed with local traditions and processes of citizen participation. This is one reason why the question of the degree of innovation with regard to European participatory budgets is more complicated than in Porto Alegre and will

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[25] For instance, Giovanni Allegretti has introduced some elements of Portuguese PB processes to Sweden; a British trainee at the Marzahn district administration (Berlin) presented the Salford PB process to the district mayor. Many other such transfer links could be enumerated.

[26] For an overview of concrete examples, see Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2005 (see also chapter 5).

be subject to a detailed empirical analysis in the next chapters. There, I will also continue the investigation of national models of participatory budgeting in Europe introduced here.

I start the presentation of the national settings with France, followed by Germany and the United Kingdom. The presentation of the political contexts in these countries revolves around four, interrelated, elements, which are important in relation to the introduction of participatory budgeting processes. These are general features of the political system (type of government, state organisation, etc.) and of the political culture, salient aspects of the current political context, as well as the existing processes of participation and their legal framework. I will have to present them in a somewhat broad-brush manner, as there is insufficient space for a more detailed demonstration. Nonetheless, this presentation yields important background information for understanding the local processes of adaptation of participatory budget institutions to new host cultures discussed in part three. Morever, it is crucial for answering the research questions related to the emergence and spread of frames of citizen participation.

Chapter 5

France: Porto Alegre à la française? Between proximity and participatory democracy

During the last few years (roughly since around the years 2006-07[1]), there has been a shift of the master frame of citizen participation in France: from proximity and proximity democracy, which dominated public debates around the new millennium, to participatory democracy that is today the 'catch word' used quasi-synonymously with citizen participation.[2] The overall argument of this section is that this frame change represents mainly a discursive change and not a change of the practice and goals of public policies. Participatory democracy won the "battle of words" (Blondiaux 2008: 24), but does not, or does only in exceptional cases (namely the 'High school participatory budget', chapter 8) influence the overall priorities and instruments of public policies in France.

By contrast, the notion of proximity, which is still used in public debates and exists in form of public institutions ('justice de proximité', 'police de proximité', etc.), does or did express the change of the underlying assumptions and goals of French political culture. It therefore can be considered as a new *référentiel*, or at least as the nucleus of a new *référentiel* in French public policies (Le Bart, Lefebvre 2005; Lefebvre 2000).[3] Namely, it reflects the inclination of the traditional, Republican conception of the state-civil society relationship towards a greater valorisation of society with regard to the state.

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[1] This presentation does not systematically integrate the changes that occured since the election of Sarkozy as President in 2008.

[2] This situation is also mirrored in the academic sphere, where scholars use the term participatory democracy as a synonym for citizen participation. Many publications deal explicitly with "démocratie participative" (Blondiaux 2008; Crépon, Stiegler 2007; Gaudin 2007; Robbe 2007; Sintomer 2009), others have 'participatory democracy' in their title and usually contain one or several case studies (Bratosin, Bertelli 2006; Blatrix 2000, 2007; Bevort 2002; Boy, Donnet Kamel, Roqueplo 2000; Falise 2003; Ginioux 2008; Nez 2006; Lefebvre, Nonjon 2003; Sciences de la société 2006, Sintomer 2006). Numerous conferences about the theme of participatory democracy have been organised in recent years, for instance in the regions of Poitou-Charentes and Rhône-Alpes or in Paris.

[3] See chapter one for the definition of the term *référentiel*.

This perspective on recent frame shifts in France allows us to add to the understanding of the development and practice of participatory budget institutions in the Hexagon, which has already been widely analysed (Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b; Talpin 2007). Whilst the Porto Alegre model played an important role in the importation of the idea of participatory democracy, I argue that this term (participatory democracy) is most often either defined or framed in terms of a proximity democracy (information, consultation, listening, etc.) or remains at the level of policy labels and discourses without considerably impacting policy practice. This is the reason why many (most?) participatory budgeting processes in France do not fundamentally differ from previously existing processes of citizen participation, at least with regard to the procedural powers (impact on rules, on process design, on decisions) citizens dispose of.

On the following pages, this argument will be laid out in more detail. I first provide a more general framework, by explaining the Republican tradition in France and its impact on the state-society relation and territorial state organisation. Thereafter, I give an overview of the recent spread and legal codification of participatory practices in France, which represent a break with the previous, state-centred approach. The last part will deal with the introduction and functioning of participatory budgeting examples and investigate if, and if yes how far, this procedure, together with the new frame of citizen participation (participatory democracy), has brought about a change in regard to existing practices of civic engagement in France.

I. A distance between state and civil society

A political debate or uproar during the last Presidential campaign (2006-07) shows how contested the idea of direct citizen participation is in France, despite the spread of the ideas and discourses about proximity and participatory democracy. On October 22nd 2006, the Socialist candidate Ségolène Royal proposed to introduce randomly-elected citizen juries for evaluating public policies. This proposition provoked a wave of protest that went through all political camps (Sintomer 2007).[4] Members of the conservative UMP, Nicolas Sarkozy

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[4] This proposition is maybe the result of individual transfer processes. Bouchet-Petersen, personal advisor of Ségolène Royal, said that she "discovered" Berlin citizen juries in Gret/Sintomer's book about Porto Alegre (first edition 2002) and presented the idea thereafter to Royal (interview with Bouchet-Petersen, 12.2.2008). This

included, criticised, for example, the "robespierrean orientations of the PS", recalled the "sans-culottes of 1793" and strongly condemned an "exaggeratedly populist" proposition.[5] Left-wing politicians, too, denounced "a demagogy close to populism", "a sort of populism that makes the game of the extreme right" or asked if this "worrying" proposition was "inspired by Le Pen or Mao Tse-toung".[6] These strong reactions can be partly explained by the conflict-riddled situation of electoral campaign, as well as by a political system which is highly politicised and based on conflict rather than on cooperation or interest mediation. Nonetheless, they also seem to account for a more profound scepticism towards the direct implication of citizens in political affairs, especially when it goes beyond the micro-local level of neighbourhood initiatives (the level of proximity). This is a central element of the traditional, French Republican political culture and transcends the right-left division.

This traditional political orientation is based upon the idea of *distance* between the state and civil society (Le Bart 2005; Le Bart, Lefebvre 2005), as well as the priority of the former with regard to the latter (in contrast to the Anglo-Saxon state conception). The overall framework is that of the indivisible state sovereignty (Rosanvallon 1990). Since the feudal era, the State in France has continued to enlarge its impact and power position over civil society and the market. This had lead to one of the most centralised state systems in Europe, which represents a kind of ideal-type of a state (Badie, Birnbaum 1982). At the head of the state is the President, who is legitimated through direct election (since 1962) and constitutes the central driving force of the political system. Since the election of Nicolas Sarkozy in 2008, there has been an increased "presidentialisation" of the French political system with Sarkozy as "*hyperprésident*" (Le Monde, 10.5.2008).

Following the Republican ideology, the central state in France is the carrier of the common welfare, '*l'intérêt générale*'. It stands 'above' society. Only elected representatives, working in the name and as representation of this state, can access and express this common welfare. Individual citizens remain always prisoners of their egoistic self-interests and their claims have no legitimacy beyond the negative one of being a lobby. Their direct participation in

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might have influenced the fact that Royal mentioned Berlin citizen juries in her first speech about participatory democracy in November 2002 and thereafter again during the Presidential campaign.

[5] This statements come (in the above order) from Bernard Accoyer, President of the UMP within the National Assembly; Renaud Dutreuil, Minister for small and medium-sized enterprises; Nicolas Sarkozy (cf. Sintomer 2007: 8).

[6] This statements come (in the above order) from André Leignel, general secretary of the Mayor's association and member of the PS; Laurent Fabius, deputy; François Loncle, deputy (cf. Sintomer 2007: 9).

political affairs is always suspicious. The political "worth" or "greatness" [*grandeur*] of the Republican state concept, as Christian Le Bart explains by using the vocabulary of Boltanski and Thévenot (2006),

> "is the result of a break-up from the territory which alone makes possible the march towards universality: universality of Law, universality of the Common Will, of the Republic, of the People; yet universality of Knowledge, of Science, of Progress; finally universality of Ideology (Socialism, Monarchy). All these creations with capital letters, produced by the republican symbolism, converge in order to disqualify the domain of proximity, which is assimilated to being small, narrow, or archaic" (Le Bart 2005: 14).

The 'universality' of French Republicanism also disregards the existence of ethnic communities, of regional specificities and of any kind of cultural differences in the public sphere (Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b: 106).

Within this kind of state ideology, not only do citizens have no possibility of legitimate claim making, but territorial levels of government are also under strong state control. Nonetheless, the situation of local government in France is quite ambivalent (Borraz, Le Galès 2005) and has changed considerably over the last few years, particularly since the first decentralisation laws of 1982 introduced by the Mitterrand government. It is noteworthy, moreover, that since the French revolution, there has always been a "tension between, on the one hand, the 'one and indivisible republic' which could not tolerate any sub-national rivals, and the claim to sub-national and decentralised autonomy, on the other" (Wollman 2000: 40). The first municipal legislation of December 1789 laid down an elaborate system of decentralised government,[7] which was brushed aside by Napoleon in 1800. Throughout the 19th century, however, Napoleonic centralism was modified (reintroduction of elections of the commune and département council in 1831-33, of the presidents of the départements and of mayors during 1971-84; in 1884, the municipal responsibilities were enlarged). In the end, this led to a system of "tamed Jacobinism", based on powerful "local worthies" (ibid: 41).

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[7] Some 80 *départements* (as well as sub-regional cantons) were created as completely new sub-national levels; the existing 43000 towns, hamlets and parishes were defined as *communes* regardless of size or urban/rural location; councils as expression of representative democracy were introduced at the decentralised levels which were to be elected on a census-based male suffrage. In addition, the position of mayor was created (Wollman 2000: 40).

With the decentralisation laws of 1982, all levels of government gained more resources, powers and legitimacy. Municipalities, for example, received powers in the areas of town planning, culture and primary education (Borraz, Le Galès 2005: 14-15).[8] Moreover, regions were created as a new and fully recognised territorial entity with competences in economic development, land use planning [*l'aménagement du territoire et la planification*], high school buildings, professional training, culture, and health policies (vaccinations and measures against tuberculosis and aids) (Raccah 2006: 93-96).[9] The idea of regions has its origins in the *Ancien Régime* where provinces incorporated strong cultural, ethnic and historical solidarities. After the revolutionary period, supporters of a monarchic régime mainly shared the regional idea. At the end of the 19th century, its influence decreased in the same way as the Republican idea gained in importance. The re-emergence of the regional idea in the 20th century is mostly due to administrative problems and the growing belief that the departmental organisation could not help resolving these problems (Auby, Auby, Noguellou 2004: 53). As we will see in chapter 8, the further transfer of competences to the regional level at the beginning of the new Millennium facilitated the organisation of a far-reaching participatory budgeting process.

The decentralisation policies have also increased the role of political parties within the *départements* and regions (Große 1993: 53). Yet, their overall role and influence within the political system remains very narrow and is much lower than for example in the 'party state' of Germany.[10] It has only been since the fifth Republic that parties have also had a constitutional status in France, but article four of the constitution defines their role only in terms of an involvement in general elections. Parties exerce a limited influence on the formation of government, the selection of the political and administrative elites and the formulation and implementation of political programmes (Kempf 2003: 323). Moreover, the political system has been traditionally characterised by a fragmentation of political parties. Since 2002, the situation has changed with the formation of the UMP (*Union pour la majorité présidentielle*), which constitutes the main political force in the centre-right (constituted by

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[8] Since the 1990s, more and more of the over 36.000 French municipalities have been working within forms of municipal cooperation called *communautés de communes* (Borraz, Le Galès 2005).

[9] Regions were created in 1972 in form of public institutions [*établissements publics*] and obtained the status of a territorial collectivity with the first laws of decentralisation in 1982 (until than, this status had been reserved to municipalities and *départements*). The laws of 1982 became effective in the year 1986 when the regional councils were for the first time elected through universal suffrage. Elections for the regional councils take place every 6 years (1986, 1992, 1998, 2004), since 2004 at majority- and proportional party-list election. The number of regional councillors varies between 31 and 209 depending on the number of inhabitants in the respective region.

[10] Taken together, all parties in France have roughly 450.000 members (www.vie-publique.fr), whereas the two traditional big German parties (SPD and CDU) have more than 500.000 each (see footnote 9 in chapter 7).

the former RPR, UDF, Démocratie Libérale); the *Mouvement démocrate* created by Bayrou in 2007 is situated in the centre; and different more or less radical parties exist towards the left of the political spectrum.[11]

The shift of political and administrative responsibilities from the state to the sub-national levels of government through the decentralisation policies has provoked a substantial organisational and personal expansion of their administrative structures (Wollman 2000: 43). Furthermore, it has led to, and has itself been influenced by, a modification of the ideological fundaments of the fifth Republic. One of the most visible expressions of this development is the modified perspective on the relation between state and society. It is no longer characterised by the idea of distance but by that of proximity and a growing emphasis on the participation of citizens in political affairs. At the same time, it is worth underlining that this conception is not completely new, but belongs to the fundaments of the Republican idea embodied in the slogan 'Liberty, equality, *fraternity*'.[12]

II. An increasing focus on citizen participation and proximity

Already before the decentralisation movement was initiated in 1982, the traditional Republican state conception had been contested. Since the 1960s and '70s, urban social movements (such as the *groupes d'action municipales*) staked a claim to a greater impact in political affairs, and members of the Second Left[13] criticised the hierarchical and centralist style of government. In 1962, for example, the Second Left politician Pierre Mendès-France called on the country to "go beyond the stage of traditional democracy of representation in order to realise a democracy of participation" (Mendès-France 1962: 216).[14] Unlike the

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[11] Haegel (2008: 214) analyses a "bipartisan tendency" of the French political system, but this hypothesis cannot be investigated in detail here.

[12] Rosanvallon (2004: 45) has underlined the fact that the idea of proximity is not a new concept, but has since the revolution been associated with the definition of the common good (together with the importance of friendship). "[I]t is important to underline that the principle of good-will [*bienveillance*] (proximity) never ceded to counter-balance and to accompany in the French political culture the tendency to 'absolutise' [*absolutiser*] the general interest (abstract)".

[13] The origins of the *Deuxième gauche* go back to the 1950s (reaction against French colonialism and communist totalitarianism), but the label was created in 1977 by Michel Rocard at the Nantes Congress of the Socialist Party in order to mark the difference to the First Left and its strong roots in Marxism.

[14] For Mendès-France, this new form of democracy is characterised, amongst others, by a broad movement of decentralisation and the spread of „various professional, cultural, trade unionist, and also political activities" that

United States, however, the idea of participatory democracy or of a democracy of participation did not spread in this period, but only 30 to 40 years later, together with the diffusion of the Porto Alegre model of participatory budgeting. The "great new idea" (Rosanvallon 2000: 386) of the 1960s and especially the 1970s, was instead *autogestion*, self management, inspired by the Yugoslav experiments with local participatory councils.

It is interesting to read the little book about self-management written by Rosanvallon in the year 1976. Parts of the introduction could be easily transposed to the present time, simply by changing 'autogestion' with 'démocratie de proximité' or 'démocratie participative'. Rosanvallon emphasises for example the new character of the notion in the French political language and explains that the emergence of new notions would often be a sign for the wear of existing terms (Rosanvallon 1976: 13).[15] He shows the diverse and contrasting interpretations of self-management in public debates. Moreover, Rosanvallon underlines the fact that this notion captures all kinds of leftist political hopes for change and innovation, but that it needs to be transformed into an "original project, if not a model" (ibid: 8) in order to become something meaningful and not to remain simply a vague notion or even a form of political alienation (ibid: 14).

30 years later, the concepts of proximity democracy, and then of participatory democracy, occupy the position that the notion of self-management had in the 1970s. Where do they come from? How have they become the dominant reference point in public debates? In how far is their success linked to broader institutional and legal developments?

Jean-Pierre Raffarin, former Prime Minister and regional President of the Poitou-Charentes region, did not create the notion of proximity. On the one hand, however, he played a major role in its diffusion in the French public debate, because he elaborated his political programme and profile around this very concept. He continuously referred to this notion in public speeches and wrote articles and books about the topic (Raffarin 2001, 2002). He portrayed himself as a politician who is 'close' to the people, who knows their needs and is therefore able to represent "*la France d'en bas*".[16] On the other hand, the success of Raffarin

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reach beyond the mere act of voting. They should correspond to „units of social life", i.e. the direct living and working conditions of people (Mendès-France 1962: 216-17).

[15] In 1976, these were the terms democracy and socialism (p. 13).

[16] Raffarin's cultivation of his "provincial roots", as well as his criticism of "Paris intellectual circles" (Raffarin 2002: 94) has some similarities with the position of the politician Kurt Beck in Germany, President of the federal

can be explained by the fact that he managed to "embody and catalyse" the concept of proximity (Le Bart, Lefebvre 2005: 12), which was already a widespread normative universe of French public policies before he came to office (it emerged in the framework of the decentralisation reforms of the 1980s).

1) The proximity-frame of Jean-Pierre Raffarin

Jean-Pierre Raffarin has been the most important, regional and national spokesman of the concept of proximity and his discourses (and texts) must have influenced the meaning of the concept in the French public debate. He provided a quite encompassing picture of his position in the book "Pour une nouvelle gouvernance" (2002), which is the reason why it is used as main source of reference for the following presentation.[17]

Raffarin's emphasis on proximity starts from the diagnosis of the lack of proximity in the French political system (Raffarin 2002: 41-66). Following his analysis, political parties, and the entire political class, are completely detached from the concerns of ordinary citizens. Parties no longer fulfil their original function of involving people in political debates; high state, party or economic officials come predominantly from the same institutions like the *Ecole Nationale d'Administration* (like Raffarin himself...) and are impregnated by the same "monoculture" (ibid: 58). Public administrations are highly inefficient and cannot (re)act appropriately to the needs and concerns of local people. Despite the fact that the state does not constitute the centre of power any more (because of the impacts of globalisation and the internal decentralisation process of power), there is a widespread perception of its supreme role. State officials in particular stick to their power position with an ever increasing, dogged determination. All in all, the whole political system suffers from "sclerosis" (ibid: 41).

In order to tackle these problems and the overall "*étatisation*" of French society, Raffarin wants to construct a "Republic of proximities", which increases the confidence in people rather than the state (ibid: 117), which is much more flexible and network-based than the

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state Rhineland-Palatinate and, during a short period in 2008, head of the Social Democratic Party. He is also conceived as 'provincial' politician and presents himself as such. Whereas Raffarin pushed for a greater decentralisation of power, Beck has created a very favourable terrain for local citizen engagement in his *Land*.

[17] This analysis of proximity made by Le Bart (2005) about two public speeches by Raffarin is in line with this presentation. The procedural aspects of citizen participation mentioned here overlap with the procedural ideal-type of proximity participation developed by Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke (2008b).

existing state structures (ibid: 122), and which takes into account the "human dimension of making politics" (ibid: 92). It involves a political (local democracy) and a social dimension (social democracy in sense of social partnerships). This Republic is rooted in the municipal level, the "first space" [*espace premier*] of the Republic where citizens have a "convenient legibility" of the Republic and are "conscious" of it.[18]

This new Republic, this "new governance of humanist inspiration" (ibid: 21) breaks up with the predominance of the state in all social (and economic) affairs and with the classic Republican state conception:

> "The state no longer has the monopole of the common good. It is now necessary to make it become an accompanying and regulating entity. One should "*désétatiser*" the society and insist on structures with human size (...) that strengthen the people. Namely, I want to talk about the family, small enterprises, associations and medium-sized cities" (131-32).

The proximity Republic holds in high esteem forms of "partnership and of networks" (ibid: 71) between the state, market and civil society; it recognises the importance of the "values of the private sphere", that is "affection, creation, 'taking roots' [*enracinement*]" and "love, friendship (...), conviviality, generosity" (ibid: 111). Raffarin constructs the idea of proximity in explicit counter-position to the conception of a state-society relation based on distance: "The private sphere is for the polity [*la politique*] not source of reduction, but of greatness [*grandeur*]" (ibid: 113).

In the Republic of proximities, legitimacy is based on the "constant delegation of the 'power to do' to citizens. It implies confidence, listening and accessibility [*disponibilité*]" (ibid: 72). It seems not by coincidence that Raffarin talks about the "power *to do*" instead of "power" *tout court*. It hints to the fact that the issue of direct citizen participation is quite ambivalent in his framework. In a very general attitude, he mentions that this "new art of governing – governance – [is] based on the participation of all" (ibid: 113), and that he intends to change the "steam" of the Republic, so that it becomes "ascending" rather than "descending" (ibid: 18). Moreover, he even mentions the need for local referendums initiated by citizens (ibid: 151).[19]

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[18] Raffarin 2001: 75.
[19] Raffarin was also supportive of the set up of neighbourhood councils in the framework of the Vaillant law of 2002 (below).

The concrete propositions in terms of direct citizen engagement are, however, fairly limited and characterised by a very state-centred perspective. In contrast to the 'Porto Alegre participatory democracy frame' presented in chapter 4, the orientation is always top-down. Raffarin wants politicians to "listen" to people (ibid: 78) and to meet them in order to "get a more precise understanding of their expectations" (ibid: 81). In addition, politicians should also mobilise people (ibid: 80) – at least when he or she feels the necessity for doing so. Moreover, institutional representatives should "help the citizens to become creators in economic, cultural or social matters" and "encourage the creation of networks of proximity solidarity" (ibid: 111). Raffarin also sustains the idea of creating an "annual day of national consultations", which would allow (!) citizens to go to the town hall in order to answer a question developed by the government, the region, the *département* and the municipality. Measures like these would help to "complete our democracy of representation through a real democracy of participation" (ibid: 151).

This democracy of participation is characterised by the neglect of social conflict and of questions of power. Citizen engagement is defined as an increased *communication* between citizens (within the family, associations, the economy...), as well as between citizens and the state (enhanced communication between elected representatives and citizens), but not in terms of a transfer of power from the state to society.[20] This perspective is based upon a peculiar ideological mix of a state-based (Republican) perspective on citizen participation, values of community and friendship, as well as the liberal-conservative emphasis on individual liberty (ibid: 107), autonomy and responsibilities (directed against the Socialist quest for equality, ibid: 108-09).[21] Raffarin has summarised this perspective about citizen participation in the following, somewhat paradox, statement: "(...) bring them [citizens] together if possible, preserve their autonomy if necessary, but always want them free and independent" (ibid: 79). It underlines the fact that his proximity frame represents only a communicative reformulation of the Republican state ideology and does *not* operate a "profound rupture" (ibid: 139) with it.

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[20] For Èmile Durkheim, the continuous communication between the state and citizens constitutes a fundamental criterion for a democracy, as well as (in contrast to Raffarin) an ever-expanding domain of state influence on the social life in order to disburden individuals from oppressing, corporatist powers and to rise their level of consciousness (Durkheim 1997: 122). He does not, however, envision a *direct* dialogue between state officials and citizens, because the state would then become a "simple reflect of the social masses and nothing more" (ibid: 133). This is the reason why he calls for the set up of intermediary institutions or an electoral system based on two or more voting echelons (ibid: 133-34) – an element that features also in the book by Raffarin (2002: 134). It would be interesting, but goes beyond the scope of this study, to compare the influence of Durkheim's texts on Raffarin's political thinking.
[21] With regard to the heterogeneous ideological roots of the proximity concept see also Ghorra-Gobin, Kirszbaum 2001.

These developments can be summarised with the following table.

Table 3: 'Proximity' frame of Jean-Pierre Raffarin

'Proximity' frame	
Developed by	Jean-Pierre Raffarin (2002)
Ideological foundation	- Liberalism (individual liberty, but also duties and responsibilities) - Values of friendship, love, conviviality, generosity - Republican state ideologie
Diagnosis	- Lack of proximity in political system - "Monoculture" of political class - Inefficient public administration - Crisis of state role - Overall "sclerosis" of political system
Prognosis	- Decentralisation, more networks and partnerships - More citizen participation - Support of "structures of human size" (family, small enterprises, etc.)
Goals	- growing esteem of "private" values in political sphere - increased dialogue and communication between state officials and citizens - "creation of networks of proximity solidarity"
Key features of participatory processes	- top-down orientation (no procedural autonomy for citizens) - no transfer of decision powers - open access to all citizens

2) A belated, but growing legal codification of citizen participation

The spread of the theme of proximity in the French public debate, where Raffarin's perspective occupies a prominent position through his speeches and publications, has to be seen in relation to a rampant legitimacy crisis of representative democracy. It is marked, as in other countries, by factors like an increased voting abstention (Braconnier, Dormagen 2007), the rise of right wing parties and low levels of trust towards politicians. In 2002, a strong sign of the rejection for the ruling political class was given by the election of a member of the right-wing political spectrum, Jean-Marie Le Pen, to the second turn of the Presidential election (instead of Lionel Jospin, candidate of the Socialist Party). In addition, from 1977 to 2002, every national election (presidential or legislative) has resulted in the defeat of the incumbent party, although two Presidents of the Republic in this period, François Mitterand and Jacques Chirac, were re-elected after a first term of office (in 1988 and 2002

respectively). A more recent expression of the growing distance between elected representatives and the electorate is the rejection of the European constitution by 55% of the voting population, whereas 92% of the members of parliament had been in favour of the ratification (Sintomer 2007: 15-16). More recently, there have been several very broad social mobilisations against government projects, which the government intended to introduce via decree, without any previous consultation with the population or concerned stakeholders (e.g. the project of the 'First Job Contract' CPE in 2006, or the university reform project in 2008-09).[22]

Moreover, the 'success' of the proximity concept is linked to the development of a "deliberative imperative" (Blondiaux, Sintomer 2002) of public policies since the 1980s and 90s. This imperative is not a mere discursive-ideological phenomenon linked to a new discourse about the merits of citizen engagement and participation, but finds its expression also in the growing legal codification of citizen participation. The legal framework to citizen participation was introduced comparatively late in France (for instance with regard to Germany), probably because of the strong ideology of the central state and of the 'volonté générale'. The only means through which citizens could formally influence the political processes in the first decades of the Fifth Republic (introduced 1958) were elections, national referenda and the direct election of the President, introduced by President de Gaulle. De Gaulle, however, used the referendum (and his direct election) rather as a means to strengthen the legitimacy of the Presidency, and not with the aim of making citizens actively participate in the making of public policies.[23]

Throughout the 1960s, '70s, and '80s, the participation of citizens therefore took either the form of bottom-up initiatives (1960s and 70s),[24] or represented a policy principle without any legal requirements (1970s and 80s), particularly in the framework of the neighbourhood renewal policies ("politique de la ville") initiated in the 1980s. This policy constituted a "real

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[22] In 2005, year of the *banlieu* riots, there has been a broad mobilisation in high schools against the project of reforming the school leaving examination (baccalauréat).

[23] De Gaulle never waited more than three and a half years to consult French citizens – either through elections or a referendum. Whilst national referenda are quite widely used in France (at the end of the 1990s, France came directly after Italy, Ireland and Denmark), local referenda are a much more contested and less practiced institution (Paoletti 1999).

[24] Despite the limited scope and duration of the different participatory practices that emerged during the 1960s and '70s, they (indirectly) influenced the orientation towards state decentralisation and the introduction of a neighbourhood renewal policy ("politique de la ville") since the beginning of the 1980s (Sintomer, Maillard 2007). One important channel for the change was the fact that some of the former activists occupied a position within the newly elected left government of 1981 and brought their ideas to their new work place.

laboratory of experimentation" with regard to participatory practices, especially within the realm of urban planning (Lefebvre, Nonjon 2003: 16). It was only in 1991 that the principle of participation found a legal framework. The first laws on participation that laid down the need for a greater citizen engagement in public policies, however, remained rather at the level of principles and did hardly contain strong and clearly formulated legal obligations (Blondiaux 2005: 120).

The "Loi d'orientation sur la ville " (13.07.1991), for example, the first legal text which mentions the topic of participation, underlines the need of a "preliminary concertation" organised by the mayor in case a certain policy measure "substantially modifies" the living conditions of the inhabitants (cf. Blanc 1999 : 178). The orientation law of 6th February 1992 (title 2 "On local democracy") is barely more direct in stating "the right of the commune's inhabitants to be informed of its orientations and consulted on decisions that concern them directly" (cf. Lefebvre, Nonjon 2003: 15). In 1995, the "loi Barnier" created the institution of "public debate" and lead to the set up of the "National Commission on Public Debate" (Revel et. al 2007). This institution has the legal obligation to organise public debates when decisions need to be made about important planning projects that affect the environment (for example high-speed trains, the use of genetically modified organisms, etc.). A more binding legislation has been introduced since the end of the 1990,[25] but the law that probably has had the greatest impact is the Vaillant law on proximity democracy, voted by the Jospin government in 2002. It contains decentralisation measures and prescribes the introduction of neighbourhood councils in cities with more than 80.000 inhabitants. It has pushed the implementation of these councils, as well as of neighbourhood funds; several thousands of neighbourhood assemblies and several hundreds neighbourhood funds exist in France today (Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b: 125).

Neighbourhood councils, which belong to the most widespread participatory procedures in France, represent quite well the 'French' approach towards citizen participation in the sense of 'proximity participation' as procedural ideal type (ibid: 75).[26] Most often, they are:

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[25] The Voynet law on "land use planning and sustainable development" (June 1999) introduces "development councils" composed of members of the "civil society" which have to be associated for the set up of territorial charters. The law on "solidarity and urban renewal" (December 2000) requires citizen participation in the set up of "Local Urban Plans".

[26] See overview table in chapter 4 section 3.

a) consultative instruments aiming to create a dialogue between civil servants, local politicians and local residents;

b) created by officers and/or politicians; citizens have a minor or non-existent role in the designing of procedures;

c) characterised by a lack of clear procedural rules as expression of a 'spontaneous' vision of participation, which conceives the implementation of new procedural rules as a potential danger to 'genuine' participatory practices (Sintomer 2005: 144); this, however, favours the dominant position of the institutional actors who normally moderate these encounters;

d) based on a logic of "selective listening", meaning that the civil servants or political actors make the synthesis of debates, by deciding for example which propositions they retain and which they do not (Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b: 321).

Neighbourhood funds partly differ from this approach, because citizen do establish their own priorities and vote for small schemes (of several hundred or thousand euro). Nonetheless, the influence of participants on the rules of the games remains limited, and the process remains confined at the micro-local level. This is the reason why neighbourhood funds still belong the proximity democracy ideal-type. The main results of these assemblies and funds are a more responsive and faster working local administration and a renewed dialogue between citizens and policy-makers. They thereby represent a sort of substitute of local political parties, which have not only lost huge parts of their members, but largely also their main function of integrating ordinary citizens to the political system (Bacqué, Sintomer 2001).

The process of participatory budgeting was introduced in France with the aim of going beyond the logic of small-scale participatory projects subsumed under the label of proximity democracy. This aim found its expression in a new frame, participatory democracy. Did the introduction of participatory budgeting institutions and of the new frame modify the situation sketched out in this section?

III. Towards a participatory democracy?

The introduction of participatory democracy as new frame of citizen participation in France, over thirty years after Mendès France called for a "democracy of participation", is linked to two main factors: the importation of the idea and practice of participatory budgeting and the role played by Ségolène Royal as main national 'policy entrepreneur' or 'idea broker'.[27] In France, the process of participatory budgeting has been introduced in reference to Porto Alegre and has contributed to the dissemination of the idea of participatory democracy. The channels of this diffusion process were various: conferences about the topic, publications[28] and various actors and networks of the left political spectrum. Amongst the latter, one can mention for instance the network DRD ("*démocratiser radicalement la démocratie*", founded by the members of the Trotskyite party LCR), engaged academics (particularly L. Blondiaux and Y. Sintomer[29]), the association ADELS and the editors of *Le Monde diplomatique*, which is one of the initiators of the World Social Forum. Despite the fact that overall quite a large number of actors have been involved in the diffusion of PB, the French context is marked by the absence of a more closely organised network, which systematically evaluates existing procedures and tries to propose 'best practice' models. The French context has been marked moreover by a quite ideological discourse about the benefits of a more participatory democracy by some of the involved actors (particularly DRD).

Initially, members of the French Communist Party in the Paris region implemented the first pilot processes of participatory budgeting. They hoped that with such an innovative participatory process (and its related idea of participatory democracy) they could renew their political identity and programme and 'rejuvenate' their political image, threatened by the break down of electoral support in France and the international crisis of communism after the fall of the wall in Berlin. PB was interesting in this regard as a novel mechanism with a certain radical touch, opposed to authoritarian socialism and representing a credible

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[27] A third, more speculative answer would be the argument that the supplementation of proximity through participatory democracy reflects a certain wear of the former term (argument put forward by Rosanvallon 1976); it had been closely associated with Jean-Pierre Raffarin, who resigned from his office as Prime Minister after the massive rejection of the European constitution by the French population (Mai 2005). I do not pursue this argument here further.

[28] The books by two politicians and activists from Porto Alegre (Genro, de Souza 1998) translated by the DRD-network, as well as the book about Porto Alegre by Yves Sintomer and Marion Gret (2005), played a considerable role in the diffusion of the process.

[29] In high school times (and the beginning of university), Sintomer was also a Trotskyite activist, but his interest for participatory democracy emerged mainly thereafter through his activism within green-alternative movements.

alternative to neo-liberal globalisation (Sintomer 2005: 142). In concrete terms, the procedures of PB in France are in their great majority the result of a combination of existing processes of participation (mainly neighbourhood councils and neighbourhood funds) with the Porto Alegre process. The latter has provided the impetus for going beyond the micro-local context of single neighbourhoods in order to engage a citywide discussion process.

Members of the Socialist party became interested a bit later in the topic of PB, which continued to develop in the country.[30] Some of them, most notably Ségolène Royal, also tried to integrate PB to programmatic party discussions. Like other Socialist and Social Democratic parties in Europe, the Socialist Party has been struggling for years with a substantial crisis of identity and of a lack of new ideas.[31] It was also S. Royal, Socialist candidate for the 2007 Presidential elections and since 2004 President of the Poitou-Charentes region, who selected the term participatory democracy in order to construct her political programme around this notion. This is the second important factor explaining the diffusion of the participatory democracy frame. First as regional President in Poitou-Charentes, and then as candidate for the Presidential elections of 2007, she included participatory democracy in her political programme and became the most prominent spokes person of this concept (such like Raffarin for proximity). Her national visibility as Presidential candidate largely contributed to the spread of the term. Because of the divulgation of the term in the public debate, but also because of the modification of Royal's own discourse during the Presidential campaign (see chapter 8), it lost, however, the politically far-reaching connotations of the first years. For instance, during the 2001 debate at the National Assembly parliamentary about the law on proximity democracy, a minority of Green and Communist Parliamentarians (and some Liberals) aimed to re-name the law in terms of a 'participative democracy' and underlined the politically more far-reaching approach of the latter with regard to the former (Sintomer 2001: 108). Before the Presidential campaign, S. Royal also followed a quite 'progressive' discourse about participatory democracy (Ginioux 2008), which she presented as an alternative concept to the then master frame of proximity democracy.

Today, the notion is most often used in order to designate any form of citizen consultation. Where politicians had employed the term proximity democracy in 2001 or 2002, they tend to

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[30] After the first World Social Forum, the number of pilots increased and reached beyond the Paris area to the whole territory, where 12 examples existed in 2005 (see overview in Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2005: 244)

[31] The attempt to develop participatory democracy to a strong theme within the party has failed, because Royal lost the election for the position of the General Secretary of the Socialist Party in 2008 against Martine Aubry.

refer today to participatory democracy. This shift represents an example of "frame transformation", i.e. the changing of former understandings and/or the establishment of new ones (Benford and Snow 2000: 624f). In the French case of participatory and proximity democracy, the 'new' understanding is actually the 'old' one, but is labelled differently. A good example is provided by Lionel Jospin in his account of the lost Presidential elections of 2007; it is worthy of extended quotation:

> "In the political field new practices are possible. At the national level, citizens can be enlightened [*on peut éclairer les citoyens*] about choices, which need to be taken in complex matters. This is the case of consensus conferences, bringing together experts and representatives of civil society (...). At the local level, practices of participatory democracy rely above all on the will and capacity of elected representatives to get in direct touch [*de se confronter directement*] with the population. Delanoé [mayor of Paris] provides a good example for this as he increases every year the number of open assemblies where interpellation and dialogue are the rule. This is the expression of a real practice of participatory democracy – with the risks of an authentic *face-à-face*. I add that such exercises do not relieve candidates and elected representatives of a duty, which for me remains in the heart of a real democracy: to present to citizens clear propositions, to realise them faithfully and to account for them at the end of the mandate " (Jospin 2007: 51).

It is noteworthy, and reflects a strong influence of the Republican ideology, that Jospin considers only the possibility of *citizens* being "enlightened" by experts and elected representatives – but not vice versa; and that in his account, the initiatives for participatory practices "rely above all on the will and capacity of elected representatives" – and not on that of citizens. This quotation shows that Jospin, who supported the law on proximity democracy in 2002, did adopt a new term, but did not change a perspective rooted in the frames of proximity and of proximity democracy.

Even when the introduction of participatory budget institutions favoured the spread of the term of participatory democracy, the number of examples where this concept directly influenced the implementation of a PB process is extremely rare. The most far-reaching example in this regard is without doubt the 'High school participatory budget', which will be presented in detail in chapter 8. In many other cases, two configurations seem to prevail. First, the organisers use the concept of participatory democracy, but frame it in terms of a proximity device (based on consultation, information, dialogue) like for instance in Morsang-sur-Orge (Talpin 2007) or in the 20th district of Paris (Ben-Hammo 2005). Second, the organisers have

a quite radical discourse of participatory democracy, but do not translate it into a practical device (e.g. in Saint-Denis) – maybe because of a lack of political will to break with the existing institutional framework, or because of political opposition to this project. A third reason could be their adherence to the 'spontaneous' perspective about citizen participation, which disregards the importance of procedures and rules for assuring, for instance, the role and power of participants and the methods of decision-making (above).[32]

Both scenarios seem to confirm the above mentioned hypothesis that participatory democracy constitutes mainly a new discourse in the French public debate, but does not challenge the existing *référentiel*(s) of public policies, namely proximity. This is one important reason why the concrete functioning of PB processes often reflects previously existing processes of citizen participation (e.g. neighbourhood funds), especially with regard to the limited procedural influence of citizens; they are miles away from the sophisticated procedural structure of the Porto Alegre model. There is no place here to further refine this argument, which should be demonstrated case by case through a careful analysis of all important factors (political-institutional context, actors, etc.). Such an investigation should also take into account procedural innovations, which point to new possible paths of development and are not necessarily related to the idea of participatory democracy (for instance the use of random selection).

After a first period of enthusiasm about Porto Alegre and participatory democracy and the development and diffusion of PB processes, the situation today seems to be stagnating or even to be in a process of regression. Some regions have copied the 'High school participatory budget' of Poitou-Charentes (namely the Bourgogne region), but invested much less money and energy in the process. The changed national context since the election of Sarkozy does of course play a role in this regard, but also the limited results participatory budgeting has shown so far. The lack of an organised network, aiming to diffuse and evaluate ongoing processes, has also had a negative impact. The current situation would be probably quite different if Ségolène Royal had won the Presidential elections: her 'Pacte Présidentiel' contained the project of a large-scale introduction of participatory budget institutions in France. With Sarkozy, such a development is more than improbable. Will participatory budgeting at all continue in France, and if yes how? Will it continue in form of small grant funding schemes

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[32] On this point see also the PB process in the city of Morsang-sur-Orge, where no rules exist that specify the way how decisions are taken (Talpin 2007: 117).

as in the UK or involve the consultation of public finances as in Germany? Will there be a growing combination with local processes and traditions like in Italy? Might a new frame of citizen participation provoke a reformulation and modification of existing practices? The next regional elections in France (2010) might become a turning point if the Socialist Party gains in support, but the future is open.

Conclusion

In France, the spread of the idea and practice of citizen participation has to be seen in relation to the critique of the traditional Republican state concept that gained in importance since the 1980s. The last years have seen a discursive shift from the proximity- to participatory democracy master frame of citizen participation. I argued that participatory democracy constitutes mainly a new discourse, but does not challenge the existing *référentiel* of public policies, namely proximity. Whilst the Porto Alegre model played an important role for the importation of the idea of participatory democracy to French public debates, this term is most often either defined in terms of a proximity democracy by the organisers of a participatory instrument, or remains at the level of mere discourse. This is a crucial reason why the concrete functioning of PB processes in France most often reflects existing processes of citizen participation (e.g. neighbourhood funds). In other words: the Porto Alegre model has been largely integrated into the existing institutional framework. Although some processes are different (namely the 'High school PB' in Poitou-Charentes), the great majority does not fundamentally differ from existing (traditional) procedures in terms of the scope and level of participation and the influence of citizens on decisions and the procedural rules.

In the United Kingdom, the recent situation of PB has been diametrically opposed to the situation in France. The current government is placing a strong emphasis on the participation and the empowerment of citizens. Moreover, the previous Minister for Communities and Local Government, Hazel Blears, developed a national strategy for the implementation of participatory budgeting in the whole country (England). How did this development come about to happen? How does participatory budgeting function in the UK and to what extent does it reflect current dynamics of the political context?

Chapter 6

Great Britian: A 'promised land' of citizen participation? Between New Labour, community empowerment and participatory budgeting

Unlike in France (or Germany), there exists no clear master frame citizen participation in the UK, but debates about citizen participation are characterised by a heterogeneous discursive and ideological universe involving terms like involvement, community, empowerment, consumer orientation and consultation.[1] In a variety of policy documents published by diverse national organisations (National Health Service, Home Office, Ministry of Justice, Communities and Local Government, etc.), Great Britain appears today as a 'promised land' for citizen participation. Particularly from a French perspective, the broad range of involved organisations (including various national organisations and government departments) and the far-reaching agenda are extremely astonishing. One not only reads about the virtues of the "Expert Patient" (Department of Health 2001) and discovers "A National Framework for Greater Citizen Engagement" elaborated by the Ministry of Justice (2008). The Community and Local Government Department goes even further by stating that it wants "to pass power into the hands of local communities so as to generate vibrant local democracy in every part of the country and give real control over local decisions and services to a wider pool of active citizens" (Communities and Local Government 2007b: 12). Finally, former Community Secretary Hazel Blears has developed a "National Strategy" for implementing participatory budget procedures in all English municipalities by 2012 (Communities and Local Government 2008).[2] The UK is today the *only* place in Europe where PB is (has been)

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[1] The fact that a master frame participation exists does not necessarily mean, of course, that debates about citizen participation would be more uniform. There simply exists an overall label.

[2] During the corruption scandal in the British Parliament and the Labour party internal revolt against Gordon Brown, Blears left her position as Secretary of State in order to return to the Salford 'grassroots' (May 2009). The 'Guardian' wrote of a "shock resignation" of Blears, who resigned on the eve of the European and local elections and as second member of the cabinet resigning in the space of 24 hours. A commentator said that "[w]ith Labour already expected to suffer its worst results since the first world war, Blear's decision to jump before the expected reshuffle can only be seen as an attempt to destabilise the government still further in preparation for a decisive push to force Gordon Brown out" (Seumas Milne, p. 25, 4.6.2009).

effectively supported at the national level by a member of government and where its use is already considered in government departments (e.g. Home Office 2008: 20).

The existence of a national strategy for the introduction of participatory budget institutions points, however, to the constraining character of the participation agenda, developed in recent years by the national government. The latter has also introduced a "Duty to Involve"[3] for local governments and other formal prescriptions for citizen involvement. Has citizen participation become no more than a new means of central government to impose its policy agenda on local authorities and thereby to develop further the centralist tendencies of the Thatcher years and the first years of the Blair government – or does it reflect the avant-garde thinking of an 'enlightened' and progressive elite? How is the participation agenda related to the political and institutional context, which is characterised by myriad of public-private partnership boards dealing at different levels with the management and delivery of (formally state managed) public services? In how far does it represent a shift away from the traditional fundaments of the British political system, following to which state sovereignty lies not within the people, but in Parliament, which is the supreme head of the country? How and by whom has the process of participatory budgeting been introduced into this ambivalent context? It will not be possible to deliver a detailed answer to all these questions (especially the first ones), but simply to provide a broad picture of current trends and developments. I shall start by presenting central features of the political context, most notably the importance of the idea of community for New Labour and institutional and political developments in the domain of citizen participation. The second part explains the importation and diffusion of participatory budgeting in the UK, which eventually led to its integration into the national empowerment agenda.

I. Central targets, privatisation, partnerships and the 'empowerment' of local communities: an ambivalent political context

Since the New Labour government came to office in 1997, it has driven forward a broad reform programme of local public services and institutions. The participation of citizens is

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[3] The duty is set out in Part 7 (section 138) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. It came into force in April 2009.

one of the central themes in the framework of this reform, but a quite ambiguous one. A focus on the 'participatory politics' of New Labour actually allows for the highlighting of some of the tensions that characterise the current political situation in the United Kingdom. First, a rhetoric of participatory democracy and of community empowerment, whilst the government has continued and developed further the privation policies of the former Conservative governments as well as the creation of semi public - semi private boards that operate outside democratic control. Second, there has been an emphasis on local community empowerment, whilst the centres of power at the local and national level remain outside the scope of participatory practices. Third, the government has pronounced the aim of strengthening the power of local authorities after Thatcher had radically reduced their political and financial autonomy, whilst it is at the same time imposing upon local governments the participation and empowerment agenda.

1) Community, community empowerment and the 'Third Way'

Notions like local community involvement and empowerment are omnipresent in British public debate. Generally speaking, 'communities' are groups of citizens which share a common interest, a common feature (language, ethnic background, etc.) or simply the same place of residence (a community can designate the residents of a neighbourhood, a district, a city or even of the whole country or world). The strong focus on community involvement and empowerment reflects the latest development of the New Labour 'modernisation agenda' initiated under the umbrella of the "Third Way" (Blair 1998). The Third Way delineates a political programme that combines, amongst others, a privatisation strategy with 'modernised' public services and a fight against social inequalities and poverty, an emphasis on citizen involvement and 'partnerships', as well as a centralist drive for conducting public policies. The development of this political orientation has been influenced, amongst others, by social theories about communitarianism and social capital and has been linked to the New Labour project through a "diffuse, intersecting group of social scientists, policy advisors, and politicians" (Bevir 2005: 30).

Since the beginning, the idea of community has been part of the underlying values of the Third Way (Blair 1998: 3). The idea of community is also "discursively central" to the New Labour project, because it allows for the establishment of the distinction to New Right and

Old Labour ideas (Levitas 2000: 188). This goal becomes clear in the following statement by Tony Blair:

> "People don't want an overbearing state. But they do not want to live in a social vacuum neither. It is in the search for this different, reconstructed, relationship between individual and society that ideas about 'community' are to be found. 'Community' implies a recognition of interdependence but not overweening government power. It accepts that we are better able to meet the forces of change and insecurity through working together".[4]

The notion of community, in this perspective, has both a factual and normative dimension: it points to the fact that people are part of different communities (the family, a neighbourhood or nation-state), and that they should be part of a community – or that it is important to *re-build* these communities. There is also a strong moral element in the community-concept as it is sustained by New Labour, pointing to the *responsibilities* and *duties* of citizens living and acting within a community. From this perspective, communities are constituted by "reasonable citizens" and should be places of consensus and mutual understanding rather than of power conflicts. Generally speaking, the notion of community "has become the central collective abstraction for new Labour, in a discourse whose organising concepts are: community, opportunity, responsibility, employability, and inclusion" (Levitas 2000: 191).

At the same time, the idea of community is not new, but has come to the centre of attention during the 1960s in the framework of a strategy to fight urban poverty. The creation of bottom-up managed community projects was also pursued by left-alternative movements, which found an intellectual platform in the New Left Review founded in 1960s (Gilcher-Holtey 2005: 13). Under New Labour, the concept of community has had a strong revival, which is partly linked to the Third Way project, party an expression of the urban renewal policies initiated by the government. Although previous governments had dealt with these issues, too, the newly elected Blair government put a strong focus on them and launched two major urban-social regeneration programmes: the *New Deal for Communities*, and the *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal*.[5]

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[4] Blair Tony, *Guardian*, 23 March 1995, cited in Levitas 2000: 191.
[5] The total cost of the 10-year programme 'New Deal for Communities' is about 2 billion pounds, in every area the regeneration plans attracts around 50 million pounds of funding. It includes 39 areas (at a very small scale, e.g. a neighbourhood or community area), which belong to the most deprived in the country. Despite of one, they are all located within the areas of the 86 authorities that are part of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. These authorities are also eligible for the *Neighbourhood Renewal Fund* (200 million pound in 2001-

It is more recently that the Labour government has linked the idea of community to a more participatory approach of politics.

> "We want to shift power, influence and responsibility away from existing centres of power into the hands of communities and individual citizens. (...) A vibrant participatory democracy should strengthen our representative democracy" (Communities and Local Government, 2007b: 1).

This type of programme is close to academic discourses and analyses (this investigation included), which regularly aim for "reforms that move beyond the traditional forms of representative democracy" (Dalton 2004: 204; Smith 2009b). It is noteworthy in this regard that the New Labour governments have always had close links to centre left think tanks working about participatory reforms, for instance the 'Institute for Public Policy Research' (or Demos) that promoted amongst others the idea of citizen juries in the UK (Bevir 2005: 30). At least at the discursive level and with regard to local authorities, there has been a shift from a focus on user participation and consultation, characteristic of the first years of the Labour government, to a more political approach to citizen participation, which finds its expression in terms like shift of power, participatory democracy and empowerment.

Empowerment is, like participatory democracy, a term that has been defined in diverging manners (Bacqué, Rey, Sintomer 2005: 29-30). In the most conflict-oriented interpretations, empowerment is seen as a means for the emancipation of suppressed groups and their access to power. In more consensual interpretations, it is rather defined as a top-down approach through which a government agency helps members of certain groups to develop a greater sense of pride in themselves and to be able to 'manage' their lives, but without altering the existing power hierarchies. The British government, or at least the Department for Communities and Local Government, follows a rather consensual and extremely broad orientation, which subsumes under the notion any kind of participatory practice. In the recent White Paper "Communities in control: real people, real power", for instance, empowerment is defined as "passing more and more political power to more and more people, using every practical means available, from the most modern social networking websites, to the most ancient methods of petitioning, public debates and citizens' juries" (Communities and Local Government 2008: 21). In other perspectives, for instance the community frame of former

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02, 300 million pound in 2002-03, and 400 million pound in 2003-04), at least if they accept certain conditions like the set up of local partnership boards.

Secretary of State Hazel Blears (below), empowerment is stronger linked to the actual transfer of assets to citizens, but restricts the area of involvement to the local level and does not link it to an overall change of the institutional framework of representative democracy.

2) From Thatcher to Blair: continuity and difference

The development of the participation- and community empowerment agenda has taken place in a political context marked by continuities and differences with regard to the previous conservative governments.[6] The British electoral system of 'first-past-the-post' provides every ruling party with a considerable power basis and therefore enables government to introduce far-reaching reform programmes.[7]

The roots of the privatisation policy and the highly centralist style of policy making mentioned above go back to Margaret Thatcher. With the aim of introducing the 'minimal state', Thatcher rolled out a massive privatisation strategy and reduced the autonomy and competences of local authorities and. In 1986, for instance, she simply abolished the oppositional councils in six metropolitan county councils, as well as the Greater London Council, an important power basis for the Labour Party.[8] Whereas such an initiative would be illegal in Germany (in France, Parliament can reduce the autonomy of local authorities), it is 'covered' in the UK by the principle of Parliamentary Sovereignty. Following this traditional state conception, the Parliament is "master of all other institutions in the land, with the power to 'make and break' as it wishes" (Wollmann 2000: 34).[9] This idea has also been expressed with regard to national referendums, very rare in the UK: "The Government will be bound by its results, but Parliament, of course, cannot be bound".[10]

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[6] As far as I know, the UK context has not been analysed with the concept of *référentiels* of public policy. This ist he reason why I refer less to this concept than I did (and will do) in the French (German) context.

[7] The new devolved institutions – the Scottish Parliament, the Welsh, Northern Ireland and Greater London Assemblies – have adopted more proportional systems (Wilson, Game 2002: 215).

[8] The London council was set up again through referendum in 2000.

[9] Great Britain is a Parliamentary Monarchy. During the Great Revolution (1688), the reign of nobility was transformed to a Parliamentary form of government (there had already been a Republican period between 1649 and 1660). However, no centralised state (with a uniform bureaucracy or a central legal system like in Germany and France) emerged in this process. Still today, there does not exist a written constitution, but the 'rule of law' consists of a set of institutions and practices, often several centuries old.

[10] Edward Short, Lord President and Leader of the House, in House of the Commons, Official Report, 11 March 1975, col. 293 (cited in Ministry of Justice 2008: 13). The same idea (Parliament not bound by referendums) is re-stated in the 2008 document by the Ministry (p. 14), which also contains a list of past referendums in the UK.

Already in the 19th century, central government considered local authorities from an instrumental point of view. They were supposed to deliver national policies and were not seen as autonomous, political entities with a distinct local identity and tradition (following the 'ultra vires' principle, local government can only do what statute permits, all action going beyond that being illegal). This instrumental perspective increased from the 1920s with the emergence of the modern welfare state. Yet, local government had a strong position, because of a distinction between 'high' and 'low politics'. The central government and its 'Oxbridge elite' carried out the 'high' politics (ruling the Empire and defining the general domestic policy); the broad area of 'low' politics (related to urban and social problems) and of policy implementation (provision for infrastructure and of social services) were left to local authorities. The latter could also levy local taxes ('rates') and were since 1835 elected through general (male) suffrage (Wollmann 2000: 34-35).

After her election in 1979, Thatcher radically reduced the financial autonomy of local government. Central government limited the local tax raising powers with instruments such as "capping" – ceilings imposed on local governments, where elected local officials could be surcharged personally for failing to deliver balanced or prudent budgets within their authority – and "ring fencing", which means that specified expenditure (e.g. on housing, education, child care, etc.) must follow and support national priorities and measures. Moreover, she introduced a broad privatisation strategy. Under the system of *Compulsory Competitive Tendering* (CCT), local authorities were forced to put out to competitive tender specified services or functions. As a consequence, a growing number of former competencies of local governments (building, construction, refuse collection, housing management, street cleansing, etc.) had been outsourced to private bidders and therefore taken out of direct local government provision and of democratic control (Wilson, Game 2002: 328 sq.). Finally, semi-public, centrally controlled institutions (called *Quangos: quasi-non-governemental organisations*) were created for the management of former municipal responsibilities such as regional development, energy policy, transport, and planning. This 'quangoisation' not only reduced even more the competencies of local authorities and took them beyond democratic control, but also made it much more difficult or even impossible to coordinate local service provision (in addition, health services and policing are traditionally under control of national public bodies, and not part of local government competences).

The Labour party had promised during the 1997 electoral campaign that 'local decision-making should be less constrained by central government, and also more accountable to local people' (see Wilson 2005: 156-7). Yet, the policy programmes of the New Labour government since its election 1997 are quite ambivalent. They did not involve a return to local authorities as near monopolistic service providers, nor to a stop of centralist policy making. Instead, the adopted (and continuously evolving) policy approach constitutes a mix of hierarchical and localist approaches, a certain decentralisation of power to Scotland and Wales,[11] the increase of partnership boards and privatisation initiatives, as well as the introduction of all kinds of participatory processes – with diverging procedural shapes and results. Recently, participatory budgeting institutions have also become part of the government agenda to enhance citizen participation, as will be outlined below.

After the successful elections, the newly-elected Blair government introduced a broad democratisation agenda and placed a strong emphasis on increasing the "efficiency and effectiveness" of public services, instead of pursuing a blind privatisation policy. Officially, one example for this changed focus has been the introduction of the Best Value regime, requiring local authorities to "make arrangement to secure continuous improvement in the ways in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness" (Local Government Act 1999, part I,3). As this quotation shows, the "economy" still plays an important role within the Best Value regime. Moreover, it turned out to be "every bit as centrally prescriptive and potentially even more interventionist" than the CCT (Wilson 2005: 165). This is the reason why some would say that it constitutes simply a new label for an approach that was, and still is, highly impregnated by the ethos of CCT. Since then, other such evaluation programmes have been introduced, lately with a stronger territorial and comprehensive focus on local service delivery.

Moreover, the powers and autonomy of local authorities did not significantly change during the first term of New Labour. New Labour slightly improved their legal status with the introduction of the "powers of well-being" in the area of economic, social and environmental development and improvement (Local Government Act 2000). These powers, however, cannot be used to raise money. This is why the financial dependence of local authorities from

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[11] This has led to a system of "quasi-federalism" (see Wollmann 2009).

central government,[12] as well as the privatisation policy (through so-called Private Finance Initiatives), remained. Blair also continued the practice of "capping", and in the first years the number of "ring-fenced" areas, as well as the number of *Quangos,* even grew compared to the Thatcher years (Wilson, Game 2002: 136-37). New Labour introduced a variety of mechanisms in order to assess the local performances with regard to centrally set targets, or used existing institutions such as the Audit Commission (created 1982 by the Tories).

Whereas this culture of continuous performance measurement and of the 'governance' through various sorts of private-public partnerships persists, recent policy developments show a stronger orientation to more 'localist' perspectives and a less centralised agenda. In the Whitepaper "Strong and prosperous communities" (CLG 2006), one can read for example:

> "This White Paper sets out our proposals which will provide freedom and space for councils to respond with flexibility to local needs and demands. It radically reduces national targets, tailors others to local circumstances and introduces a lighter touch inspection system" (CLG 2006: 4).

One means by which "local needs and demands" are taken into account are *Local Area Agreements* (CLG 2007b). They reduce the number of centrally fixed targets for local authorities and give them more possibilities of establishing local priorities (CLG 2007). They are set up by Local Strategic Partnerships,[13] are then agreed between the local area (local authority and LSP) and central government; they function on a 3 year cycle. Part of this more 'localist' policy agenda is also the emphasis put on the participation and 'empowerment' of citizens.

3) The ‚participatory politics' of New Labour

'Democratic Renewal' has been since 1997 a central theme of the New Labour agenda and has marked a difference to the previous Conservative governments. In the first years of New Labour, however, 'democratic renewal' included mainly institutional measures such as to modernise local electoral arrangements, to introduce clearer political management structures,

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[12] Central government controls local governments through two central means: by regulating the amount of money that can be spent locally and by scrutinising the way this money is spent (Wilson 2005: 160).
[13] Created in 2000, LSPs have the tasks to bring together local plans, partnerships and initiatives to provide a common forum for public service providers in order to match the local needs and priorities. From 2007 on, LSPs have become a mandatory requirement for all local authority areas; they have the duty to develop and monitor local action plans, that is Local Area Agreements.

and to strengthen the council's role as 'leaders' of their local communities. There did exist a fourth, more 'participatory' element in this agenda ("to develop new ways in which councils listen to their communities and involve people in their decisions"). It was, however, mostly oriented towards the participation of citizens in the role of *consumers* of local services (the quasi-unique focus of the previous Conservative governments), and consisted of the spread of surveys, focus groups, interactive internet pages, or various sorts of consultative meetings.[14] "Innovations in citizenship or democratic engagement were relatively neglected", though the organisation of citizen juries[15] or of local referendums constituted noticeable exceptions (Wilson, Game 2002: 359).

In the last years, the focus has shifted from a consumer-orientation towards the greater involvement, engagement and 'empowerment' of *citizens* and *communities* (e.g. Cabinet Office 2007; Communities and Local Government 2006, 2007, 2008; Ministry of Justice 2008). Already before, the participation and empowerment agenda was part of the neighbourhood renewal agenda (e.g. Social Exclusion Unit, Cabinet Office 2001). During recent years, however, it has spread to other policy domains like for instance the Police (Home Office 2008), Health (National Health Service Act 2006), Justice (Ministry of Justice 2008), and Youth.[16] One reason for this shift is probably linked to a process of policy learning (the growing practical and academic evidence about the potential positive outcomes of local participatory practices[17]). Another reason is related to a developed legitimacy crisis of representative democracy:

> "61% of citizens feel that they have no influence over decisions affecting their local areas; only 42% of people are satisfied with the performance of their local council; only around a third of the population vote in local elections, and of those who do not vote 41% claim that it is because they do not think it will make a difference; and residents in the most deprived areas have the highest level of alienation from the political system" (CLG 2006: 30-31).

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[14] See overview of existing particiaptory mechanisms in Wilson, Game 2002: 45.

[15] The Institute for Public Policy Research has diffused this process since 1994 and set up a first series of experimentations in 1996. After the election of the Labour government, the number has grown considerably, with more than 200 examples that have been initiated (Sintomer 2007: 116).

[16] Already now, the Department for Children Schools and the Family (DCSF), the Youth Opportunity Fund and Youth Capital Fund involve young people in making decisions on the allocation of these funds in their area. There exists a commitment in the DCSF's ten year youth strategy "to encourage councils to take more account of young people's views when deciding on resources for services for young people so that by 2018 young people will have a real say on how 25 per cent of that spending is allocated" (Communities and Local Government 2008: 22).

[17] The Department for Comunities and Local Government itself has published a research report, which underlines the positive outcomes of PB and of other participatory instruments (CLG 2009).

Further signs of this 'crisis' have been the loss of party membership for the Labour and Conservative party, whilst extreme right parties could expand their influence.[18] During the 2009 local elections, which took place in the shadow of the strong party-internal power battle, the Labour party remained even behind the Liberal Democrats, which brings into question the traditional two-party system.

The emphasis of the government on the topic of citizen participation ("We want all councils to focus more on their citizens and communities", CLG 2006: 7) has definitely provoked a spread of participatory practices. The great majority of local councils have established some form of citizen involvement, be it user- or citizen oriented. In a survey carried out in 2007 with 102 councils, for example, the following picture emerged (which is based on the self-declaration of these authorities):

- 90 % [of the surveyed councils] have neighbourhood forums/meetings which are open to the public
- 90 % use residents' focus groups
- 83 % allow questions from the public at council/committee meetings
- 64 % hold interactive budget consultations (...)
- 30 % have ward budgets for individual councillors
- 28 % guarantee an automatic response to petitions
- 24 % use citizen juries
- 10 % have a leaders/chief executives' blog to which the public can comment (CLG 2007a: 23)

Moreover, the Participatory Budget Unit, the official partner of the government for carrying out the "National Strategy" for implementing PB (below), writes in the June 2009 e-Newsletter that it receives more and more queries from local authorities who "are now beginning to think about how they can evidence the Duty to involve". These developments witness the integration of citizen participation to the general practice and normative horizon

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[18] Compared to the 'party democracy' of Germany, the most important political parties in the UK have a more reduced membership base, which is probably linked to the fact that until the 1970s parties played a quite limited role in the UK, particularly at the local level (Wilson, Game 2002: 282). Between 1997 and 2006, the number of Labour party members went from a peak of 405.000 down to less than 200.000; the party had 176.891 members at the end of 2007, which represents less than a forth with regard to the membership rateof the 1970s (roughly 800.000). During the last European elections, the National British party received 2 seats, the first time this happened at national elections.

of local government, i.e. the *référentiel* of public policy. With regard to the UK, it is probably also true that never before have citizens had so many institutionalised possibilities of engagement – a statement that will reappear in relation to the "participatory boom" in Germany. It is not clear, however, what impact this development has, has had, or will have on the non-institutionalised participatory groups like social movements or other 'bottom-up' organisations, which flourished in the 1960s and '70s.[19] Do they 'boycott' the government agenda or try to cope with it? Will they be weakened or strengthened in their activities?

Despite the clear spread of the idea and practice of institutionalised citizen participation, many observers are quite sceptical about the changes these developments might lead to. They question, first, the relative importance of citizen participation with regard to the considerable power that remain in the hand of public, public-private and private organisations (Smith 2009a; Hay, Stoker, Williamson 2008). A second criticism concerns the difference between the centralist imposition of the empowerment agenda at the local level, whilst national government is itself unwilling to cede its own power. Citizens and communities are called on to participate at the local level (and local councillors are called on to devolve their power to the citizens), but the overall institutional framework is not subject to modification.

> "The Government believes that representative democracy – and therefore Parliament – must remain at the heart of the governance of this country" (Ministry of Justice 2008: 3).

This discussion paper proposes three, consultative instruments for increasing the citizen 'input' to the system in addition to regular elections. First, it names deliberative forums like 'citizens' summits' (representative groups of 500-1000 citizens elaborate a recommendation about a specific topic, which will be put to Parliament for consideration) and citizen juries (representative panel of 50 to 100 citizens, consulted about specific issue and 'fed into' government debates rather than being put to Parliament). Second, the paper mentions petitions (petitions put forward by citizens that attract more than 200 signatures are passed to

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[19] The development of social movements began however early in Britain, the 'Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament' being created already in 1958. In the 1960s, "the radical student and anti-war movements (…) stimulated the rise of women's and other personal liberation movements, but were, during the 1970s, overshadowed by the rise of trade union militancy and competing trotskyist groups. After Labour lost office in 1979, forces that elsewhere achieved autonomous development as 'new social movements' were, with the exception of environmentalism, largely brought within the orbit of the Labour left, which for much of the 1980s was in the ascendant within the Labour Party even as the party itself was in electoral outer darkness." Since the election of New Labour in 1997, social movements contested the 'war on terror' and increasingly investigated the emerging 'global justice' agenda (Rootes, Saunders 2005).

appropriate government department for consideration and response). Third, it proposes referendums without binding force on Parliament, but aiming to influence Parliamentary debates on the issues at stake. Even though these instruments do not directly relate the perspective of citizens to the decision-making process, a 'serious' and regular organisation of such procedures could considerably change a style of policy making dominated by small expert circles and very limited citizen impact.

A third type of critique condemns, however, the limited outcomes of many such practices, especially when they are carried out without adequate resources and professional expertise and experience (Smith 2009a: 19). Smith criticises, furthermore, the limited political imagination of participatory practices implemented in the UK. Comparing the situation in the UK to probably the most far-reaching examples of participatory governance today, the PB process in Porto Alegre and the citizens' assemblies in British Columbia and Ontario in Canada,[20] he evaluates the ongoing reform process in terms of a "rather conservative reform strategy" unlikely to empower local people and to tackle the 'crisis' of representative government. It is true that at local level, participatory instruments seem to be rare that deal with issues related to the overall political agenda (for instance the 1999 referendum in Milton Keynes about the forthcoming budget and council tax level). Instead, widespread approaches are either the consultation about specific questions and/or the devolution of small amounts of money to groups of citizens (communities) without involving them to the discussion and decision about the broader framework (e.g. role of public private partnerships in the delivery of public services). With regard to this situation, the strategy of the government seems to be

> "[t]o protect the existing core decision-making responsibilities of national and local representative institutions whilst allowing citizens controlled, but considerably enhanced, access through a variety of new engagement mechanisms" (Hay, Stoker, Williamson 2008: 4).

The recently-increased emphasis on community participation and empowerment perfectly fits into this framework, because it usually involves the participation of *local* communities to matters of *local* concern, for instance related to a particular neighbourhood. The community frame of Hazel Blears, former Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, highlights this specific orientation. It is of particular importance in the present framework,

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[20] See chapter 2.

because she is the person who initiated the National Strategy of participatory budgeting, to which I will turn thereafter.

4) The community frame of Hazel Blears

Hazel Blears is a long-standing supporter of a more 'localist' agenda and of the idea of 'bringing power closer to the people'. This is also the way she presents herself: "All my life I've been a firm believer in local activism. My whole political approach, fashioned on the streets and estates of Salford, is anchored in localism and devolution" (CLG 2007a: 4). Blears is MP for the city of Salford, where the first initiatives for the introduction of a participatory budget process in the UK were taken.[21] She belonged to the supporters of the 'New Localism' in the Blair government, a reform orientation developed against the centralist tendencies of the first government mandate and aiming to devolve power to citizens, communities and service users (Stoker 2004). David Miliband, former Minister for Communities and Local Government, once summarised the guiding idea of New Localism with the term 'double devolution': "a double devolution of power from Whitehall to the town hall and from the town hall to citizens and local communities".[22] In the pamphlet "Communities in Control" (2003), Blears delivers a quite extensive analysis of the meaning of the term community, which is why I use it as basis for the analysis.

The starting point in this text is not the diagnosis of a problematic situation, but the quest for a new political and ideological programme for New Labour after the first term in office, i.e. a "new governing narrative" (Blears 2003: 3). Nonetheless, the text contains several critical assessments that motivate this new orientation. For instance, Blears mentions the overall reluctance of policy makers and "experts" to give up parts of their power (ibid: 3), as well as the paternalistic "'we know what's good for you' syndrome" on the part of policy-makers (ibid: 16). Moreover, traditional Socialist models of state ownership and corporatism were not seen to be be working in the modern context, which is why there was a need to investigate new forms (ibid: 11). Finally, the pamphlet mentions the problem of poor service delivery in deprived areas (ibid: 15) and of low voting turnouts linked to a widespread "distrust of authority and a sense of powerlessness" (ibid: 29). This is the reason why Blears proposes a

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[21] See chapter 9 and below.
[22] The Guardian, 21.2.2006.

"new vision of the public realm" based on the core ideas of empowerment and community. Concretely, it is about:

- "empowering people to take decisions about the priorities and direction of local public services
- giving people ownership and a stake in the running of public services
- devolving power and opportunity within the public services to local communities (3)

In short, it is about taking power away from the politicians, the 'experts' the bureaucrats and the officials, and passing it to the people." (ibid: 3)

This perception aims to go beyond mere consultation in form of citizens' panels, citizen juries and all kinds of forums, as these processes do "not alter the underlying power structures" (ibid: 4). It is instead necessary to combine the participation of communities with an empowerment agenda:

"Socialists must include a dimension of empowerment and control over the collective destiny in our definition of community" (ibid: 8).

One powerful means of engagement would be "community ownership", for example through housing associations or housing co-operatives (ibid: 13). More recently, Blears has linked this agenda closely to the process of participatory budgeting (Communities and Local Government 2008). The overall goals of participatory processes are political (political education, active exercise of citizenship; "revitalisation of politics", p. 28), administrative (greater flexibility and responsibility of public administrations) and social, aiming at a more "cohesive" and "egalitarian society" and less "anti-social behaviour" (Blears 2003: 11).

Blears links community participation and empowerment to the local level. She almost always talks about *local* communities: that means engagement and ownership at the local, not the national level. She wants, for example, to put "local communities in the driving seat" for reforming the public sector, and "local communities to take control through genuine citizenship" (ibid: 4). Moreover, the domain of engagement is restricted: it concerns mainly the management of public services (housing, policing, etc.), but not, for example, decisions on or involvement with regard to the overall policy orientation of a local authority. In contrast to the authors of the participatory democracy frame in Porto Alegre, she restricts the domain of

public involvement. This is the reason why she does not envision the control of *society* over the *state*, but a "community control over services" (ibid: 16).

Moreover, Blears does not envision a strong degree of self-regulation of participatory processes through the participants. "Communities cannot ever be entirely self-policing, self-defining, and self-run". Instead, there "will always be the need for mediation between communities and for a higher authority of rules and laws, no matter how devolved our systems of decision-making and governance" (ibid: 7-8). The kind of 'power-sharing' envisioned by Blears is therefore vertical and not horizontal. It does not aim at the existence of two equally important (and therefore 'horizontal') "centres of power" as in Porto Alegre, but the ('vertical') devolution of power to the local level under maintenance of an overall steering competence for the national government. With regard to the health service, this idea becomes very clear when she states that "[o]ur desire to decentralise and pass power to the community (...) is tempered by our commitment to national standards of care and excellence" (ibid: 19).

One key for the understanding of the particular, 'participationist-localist' orientation of Blears might be its ideological roots. Blears cites a paragraph of G.D.H. Cole, who developed the theory of Guild Socialism that, broadly speaking, aims at a system of decentralised associations and direct participation in the workplace and neighbourhoods.[23] He was also an advocate for the cooperative movement,[24] to which Blears refers directly by saying that the concept of community ownership "borrows heavily" from influences like the co-operative movement (ibid: 12).[25] Moreover, the communitarian thinking comes into play. Even if Blears marks a clear distance to the "hard-line" positions of Amitai Etzioni, she emphasises the importance of communities for peoples' lives, for example through fellowship and the provision of a sense of identity and culture (ibid: 8); at the same time, communities should be democratically organised and tolerant with regard to those who are not part of them.

The main features of Blears' community frame are summed up in the following table.

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[23] He is also, however, referred to by Carol Pateman (1970) who elaborated a theory of participatory democracy that goes beyond the neighbourhood level and aims at a general democratisation of society.
[24] Robert Owen is considered to be the 'father' of the movement.
[25] Furthermore, she cites the idea of "mutuality" as form of organisation that describes, amongst others, "mutual models of ownership or decision-making" (Blears 2003: 13) at the local level.

Table 4: 'Community' frame of Hazel Blears

'Community' frame	
Developed by	Hazel Blears (2003)
Ideological foundation	Guild Socialism, communitarianism
Diagnosis	- Reluctance of policy makers and "experts" to give up parts of their power - prevalence of paternalistic approach to citizen participation - Socialist models of state ownership and corporatism do not work in modern societies - Poor services in deprived areas - Low voting turnouts because of distrust in authorities and sense of powerlessness
Prognosis (in political sphere)	- More citizen engagement in realm of local public services (participatory budgeting) - Ownership of people (communities) over public services (housing cooperatives)
Goals	- Political (political education, and active exercise of citizenship, "revitalisation of politics") - Administrative (greater flexibility and responsibility of public administrations) - Social nature (a more "cohesive" and "egalitarian society"; less "anti-social behaviour")
Key features of participatory processes	- ownership of certain local institutions (people own, manage, direct and control) - accountability of elected representatives - to go beyond mere consultation - Devolution of power to local level, but maintenance of overall steering role of state

II. Participatory budgeting: from Porto Alegre to the New Labour empowerment agenda

After her election as Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Hazel Blears has put the process of participatory budgeting on the national political agenda and has pushed forward the empowerment agenda of the government. Before that date, a network of committed civil servants, activists and consultants had been diffusing and advocating for the idea and process of PB for several years. In contrast to the situation in France and Germany, party politicians for a long time played only a very limited role in the diffusion and implementation of this procedure. Initially, instead, civil society activists inspired by Porto

Alegre brought it onto the agenda. Why did Blears support the process of participatory budgeting and not any other participatory process? How has it been diffused and implemented in the UK context?

1) The origins and diffusion channels of PB

Like for most countries, the principle source of inspiration for PB in the UK was Brazil, and especially the cities of Porto Alegre and Recife.[26] Interestingly, however, the driving force for implementing PB in the UK have not been left-wing political parties, but NGOs and people working within the broad domain of neighbourhood renewal and bottom-up community activism.

One of the first transmitters of the idea of PB towards the UK was a small non-governmental-organisation based in Manchester, Community Pride Initiative (CPI), supported by the ecumenical charity Church Action on Poverty. Together with Oxfam's UK Poverty Programme, CPI had developed the idea of a 'learning exchange' between the 'North' (Manchester, Salford) and the 'South' (Porto Alegre, Recife).[27] In this framework, a member of a Brazilian NGO came to Salford and Manchester in May 2000 and introduced the idea of PB. This visit was followed three months later by a 10-day trip from three activists from Salford and Manchester to Porto Alegre and Recife in order to learn about the practice of PB.

After this visit, members of CPI (which since January 2006 has become the 'PB Unit') tried to develop and promote participatory budgeting in the country. Members of CPI saw participatory budgeting as a promising process, which could provide a more systematic and comprehensive approach towards issues of community participation, improvement of service delivery and the renewal of deprived neighbourhoods – all issues that were, and are, dealt with under the Blair/Brown reform agendas as shown in the last pages. They also believed that PB could be linked to existing structures of community participation and explored this idea in the region of Greater Manchester, especially in the cities of Manchester and Salford.

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[26] A previous version of the section has been published in Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke (2008b) and will be published in a separate article (Röcke 2010).
[27] Humanitarian organisations and those working in the domain of North-South development (Oxfam, Save the Children, War on Want) have a long history in the UK and have organised broad sensibilisation campaigns and mobilisations in the past. They are part of the 'voluntary sector', whereas small local associations belong to the 'community sector'.

Whilst the local advances with regard to the development of PB were slow,[28] the idea started to spread throughout the country.

In 2004, members of the neighbourhood renewal team in Bradford's 'Local Strategic Partnership' initiated the first official PB pilot in the UK. One source of inspiration had been the book "Reclaim the State" (2003) by Hilary Wainwright, a left-wing activist, free-lance author and editor of the leftist journal "Red Pepper". The organisers decided to develop a PB process on the basis of existing processes of small grant funds spent by deprived groups of the population. Here, like in France, the Porto Alegre reference led to the development of micro-local processes to a procedure with a broader territorial and/or thematic scope. The procedural model elaborated consists of two main steps: the elaboration of project schemes by local community groups; a decision about these schemes by all involved groups during a public meeting.[29]

In the following months and years, this procedure spread and influenced many other pilot projects of PB in the UK (it was more influential than the procedure in London Harrow launched in 2005, consisting of a consultation about the city-wide budget). Especially helpful in this regard was the production of a short DVD about the process, which gave a concrete idea of this process and could be easily distributed to interested people or downloaded via internet (many pilot areas have thereafter continued to produce a DVD of their experience). For instance, the first Newcastle PB process (2006) was influenced by the Bradford process (Lavan 2007), but thereafter became an own point of reference for its processes involving the environment and young people.[30] Today, the Newcastle process belongs probably to the most far-reaching processes, because the organisers are establishing a 5 year plan and aim to involve different kinds of budgets.[31]

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[28] See chapter 9.

[29] This process was the model that inspired the elaboration of the "community funds at neighbourhood- and city-level" ideal type by Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b; see table 2 in chapter 4.

[30] The city of Newcastle is also one example where the idea of PB has first been introduced through European networks of participatory budgeting. Council members of Newcastle had first heard of PB through the participation of their city in the network "Partecipando" of the EU programme URBACT, which aims at a greater citizen participation in urban regeneration actions. Thereafter, they visited Bradford, which had just organised its first PB pilot project, and then developed their 'own' project, also consisting of spending specific 'pots' of money. The PB Unit supported them in this undertaking.

[31] Presentation given at National PB conference "Making Spending Count?", 15.9.2008 Manchester.

The diffusion of this type of practical information took place through indirect channels like workshops and conferences or direct visits of involved actors. The PB Unit has played a fundamental role for the dissemination of the idea and practice of PB in the UK, but also other groups or organisations, like a group of researchers at Bradford University or the Power Inquiry thinktank. The website established by the PB Unit, putting out a monthly newsletter of PB, seems to be particularly effective in this regard.[32] The PB Unit could increase its activities through the grant funding by a government department, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, which is now called (Department of) Communities and Local Government (CLG). A former senior community advisor to the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit in CLG, who was working on community participation and empowerment programmes, launched this initiative. Before coming to the CLG in 2001, she had been involved in the development of the 'Oxfam UK Poverty Programme' and had made links with members from Community Pride Initiative.

The idea of participatory budgeting immediately 'resonated' with her broader interests in alternative and radical participation methods. Her political and professional engagement is rooted in the values of liberation theology, which is also part of the ideological roots of the workers' party in Porto Alegre.[33] In addition, the Brazilian process showed important similarities with her previous work on participation projects in UK deprived areas, for example Tenant Management Organisations. Since 1994, council tenants have had a statutory 'right to manage' their estates including a devolved budget to carry out the housing responsibilities (such as repairs, cleansing and allocations).

> "There are many parallels between the devolved budgets managed by TMOs and participatory budgeting. Because of my experience in developing TMOs, I immediately thought that participatory budgeting could provide a framework for extending resident involvement beyond housing to a much broader service delivery agenda."[34]

In order to facilitate the diffusion of and discussion about PB, she set up a 'National Reference Group' in 2004 (in close cooperation with the PB Unit).[35] This group can be

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[32] www.participatorybudgeting.org.uk.
[33] Two interviews with this former senior community advisor to the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, 10.12.2007 and 18.10.2008.
[34] Ibid.
[35] A less formal forum for exchanging ideas about PB (in form of case study reports, training days, informal networking) is the "Practitioner Group", initiated by the PB Unit at the beginning of 2004.

considered a "policy community" (Kingdon 1984: 123). Members of a policy community are specialists of a given policy area, both inside (politicians, civil servants) and outside government (academics, consultants...). In the case of the NRG, the members were national civil servants (Audit Commission, Treasury...), representatives from interested NGO's, local government officers involved in pilot projects and members of the PB Unit. Members of a policy community are united by a common concern with a particular issue and interact, more or less intensely, with each other, without necessarily sharing the same set of beliefs and values. In the case of the Reference Group, the common work of the group members was carried out continuously over a quite long period of time and consisted of evaluating ongoing processes and of seeking how to get more political support for PB:

> "People would come along let's say from Newcastle, from Bradford and the places that were doing the piloting projects; and they would talk about what they had done; and we would compare [processes], learn from the different places; but also we did discuss at the reference group about how we can get more support for PB. So there was a certain degree of (...) planning and thinking about 'okay; if things continue to work – how can we get more publicity for it? What types of events [can we organise]?' (...) It was like a caucus ... a group of people who were committed to PB; using there interest and support for it and their positions within [and outside] government to promote it."[36]

In the first period, the Reference group brought together people who's activism is rooted in Liberation theology or who are radical leftist activists aiming at more bottom-up participation of ordinary citizens and the transformation of power relations. Other members supported participatory budgeting for its potential benefits on a more user-oriented and efficient delivery of public services. Since the introduction of the 'national strategy', the group has become bigger (including probably more diverse perspectives) and more formal in its way of functioning.

2) The introduction of PB to the national policy agenda

The diffusion activities of this network were particularly effective through the combination of the evaluation and support of local experiences with PB and its diffusion amongst officers in government departments and national organisations. One first 'success' was the mentioning of participatory budgeting in a government White Paper (CLG 2006), which had been influenced

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[36] Interview with consultant on citizen participation, formerly working for the Audit Commission and member of the National Reference Group (9.11.2007).

by a group member. Already before that date, the Power Inquiry (a 'participatory' think tank) mentioned participatory budgeting as "exceptional innovation" particularly well-suited for the British context (Smith 2005). Moreover, the work of the Reference group was facilitated by the evolving of the political context to a much more 'localist' and 'participatory' agenda, as I outlined above. Participatory budgeting therefore fitted the government agenda increasingly better – at a certain point almost "like a glove".[37] The final 'breakthrough' of PB to the national policy agenda was then led by Hazel Blears, newly elected Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (June 2007). She put the process in the centre of her political programme and established a link between the national empowerment agenda and PB – with PB occupying a central position. Participatory budgeting was put "at the heart of the Government's drive to devolve more decisions on local services and facilities to local communities" (Communities and Local Government 2008: 11). Blears developed a "national strategy", which foresees the introduction of PB in all local authorities (in England) by 2012 (ibid) and has already been started to be implemented.

In addition to the positive contextual conditions, the selection of participatory budgeting by Blears can be considered a political strategy to develop a new and original political programme and to develop or strengthen a certain political profile.[38] Participatory budgeting presents the advantage of being a process with a certain 'radical touch' and is therefore very suitable for launching a new political project. At the same time, the procedure had already been mentioned in a White Paper and therefore did not represent a completely exotic idea any more (it was known, moreover, that similar processes exist in other European countries).[39] Finally, it certainly played a role that Blears' constituency is the city of Salford. She was elected as Member of Parliament for Salford in May 1997 (she had been a city councillor between 1984 and 1992 and still lives there) and therefore was certainly aware of the discussion process between the city council and Community Pride Initiative about the

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[37] Interview with free-lance consultant about citizen particiaption, formerly working for the Audit Commission and member of the National Reference Group (9.11.2007).
[38] I argued in a similar vein with regard to the diffusion of participatory budgeting and participatory democracy by Ségolène Royal in France. It would be worth analysing in detail the role of women in the development of participatory practices. Still playing a rather marginal part in the field of political power, participatory governance could maybe become a vector for the 'feminisation' of politics (Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b: 277). In Germany, several participatory budget processes have been initiated by women, for instance in Berlin Lichtenberg and in Berlin Charlottenburg.
[39] The PB Unit, through its participation and link to researchers and networks in other countries, regularly ,fed in' information about PB in other countries to the UK debates. Whereas the existence of PB in other countries gave more legitimacy to the idea, it probably did not have a direct influence on developments in the UK (interview with two members of the National Reference group and a member of the PB Unit).

introduction of a PB process, initiated in 2000. On a site note, it might not be by mere coincidence that one of the first members of CPI has become her official policy advisor on questions of community participation.

In short, the introduction of PB to the national agenda by Blears can be summarised as follows.

> "The vocabulary was there. (…) PB was no longer a scaring idea, [but] something that had been discussed for a while. (…) She [Blears] would have heard about it [in Salford]. I think she wanted to make a mark when she first got in [office] with something, and this was the idea that was floating around. Her officers in the CLG [Communities and Local Government] were promoting it saying 'this looks like it is an idea that could be really interesting'. And it had been referred to briefly in the white paper (…) last October [CLG 2006]. And I think she thought 'okay yeah let's go with this'. It's funny how these things happen." [40]

Since the introduction of the "national strategy", the number of participatory budget increased rapidly and a broad range of local and national institutions, organisations and consultancy firms are now dealing with the topic. The PB Unit counts 17 pilot projects on its webpage (although the newsletter refers to much more initiatives),[41] whilst only several years ago it was possible to count the number on one hand (Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2005). A process of large-scale institutionalisation has started. Unlike the first examples, which were initiated in reference to the Porto Alegre model, the wave of recent examples has been set up without this link, but in relation to existing models in the UK, in a process of 'procedural path dependency'. This development seems to have reinforced the role of the Bradford procedure, influential since the beginning. The adopted system of grant spending in particular (disadvantaged) city areas, which are receiving specific national funding, have been repeated in many other places: "Most, but not all, of the PB initiatives in the UK to date have been applied to the allocation of small grants" (PB Unit 2008a: 12). The idea of a local spending event involving ordinary citizens is the central criteria for a participatory budgeting process in the UK. The presence of an annual cycle or of scrutiny powers for participants is considered as a positive aspect, but their absence "should not prevent implementation of PB" (ibid: 8).[42]

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[40] Interview with free-lance consultant, formerly working for the Audit Commission and member of the National Reference Group (9.11.2007).
[41] Consulted on 3.7.2009.
[42] The same perspective was expressed by several participants during a national PB conference organised in Manchester in September 2007, where also Hazel Blears gave a talk. The presented definition by the PB Unit

In the course of this institutionalisation process, the process of participatory budgeting has been increasingly linked to the existing institutional framework in the sense that PB as a 'decision method' is applied for spending existing pots of money, which in the majority tend to be rather small. "Two neighbourhoods in Crewe will have the opportunity to decide how 12,000 pounds of public funds should be spent in their areas".[43] "On 14th March, over 160 people voted on how to spend 30,000 pounds in Brinnington, Stockport".[44] "Over 240 people turned up to vote on how to spend 60,000 pounds in their areas in March [city of Mansfield]. (…) On Saturday 21st March, children and young people got to vote on how 50,000 pounds should be spent on projects for young people with disabilities" [city of Salisbury].[45]

The source of funding can vary,[46] as well as the steering body (council, LSP, neighbourhood management, a government department or agency). Nevertheless, the linkage between 'PB' and 'spending small grants' in form of a public 'PB event' (and not a participation cycle) is very widespread and can be considered as 'national' specificity. It reflects the networking activity of the National Reference Group, who diffused the Bradford model (which thereafter influenced other processes) and their pragmatic approach to the issue, which one could summarise as follows: It is important to get things started, even at a small-scale, rather than waiting for ideal conditions or processes. Moreover, the previous organisation, Community Pride Initiative, based its work exactly around developing processes that involve local, particularly disadvantaged groups of people and 'empowers' them through direct local activities and the creation of 'social capital'.[47] This could also be the reason why the PB Unit might have focussed initially more on the diffusion of small grant community procedures rather than on more 'abstract' consultative processes like in the London Borough of Harrow.

Whereas it seems that members of the PB Unit link these local processes to an overall agenda of community empowerment, which in the long run should also impact the broader institutional framework in terms of a general democratisation, it is not sure if this is also the perspective standing behind the national strategy. For instance, Hazel Blears has several times

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witnesses a development towards a more 'reformist' position, whereas the initial agenda was much more directly inspired by the Porto Alegre model (see chapter 9 about Salford).

[43] PB Unit e-new letter June 2009.

[44] PB Unit e-new letter April 2009.

[45] PB Unit e-new letter March 2009.

[46] The can include parts of the mainstream budget, Neighbourhood Renewal and New Deal for Communities funds, neighbourhood management funds, Neighbourhood Police Budgets, Primary Care Trust funds, Youth Opportunity Funds (PB Unit 2008a: 12).

[47] See chapter 9.

referred to the idea of 'community kitty' instead of 'participatory budgeting'. A kitty usually relates to a small amount of money and implies a one-off fund to spend – and not a modification of the existing institutional framework of representative democracy. This approach fits in the framework of her community frame presented above. It focuses on the transfer of power to the micro-local level, but without altering the institutional context and the monopole about the 'global' and strategic decisions for elected representatives. Diffused in such a manner, participatory budgeting might become nothing other than one element in a depoliticised structure of governance involving private, state and civil society actors under the overarching power of Parliament. A citation by Lord Falconer (2003) is telling in this regard and therefore worthy of being quoted at length:

> "What governs our approach is a clear desire to place power where it should be: increasingly not with politicians, but with those best fitted in different ways to deploy it. Interest rates are not set by politicians in the Treasury, but by the Bank of England. Minimum wages are not determined by the Department of Trade and Industry, but by the Low Pay Commission. Membership of the House of Lords will be determined not in Downing Street but in an independent Appointment Commission. This depoliticising of key decision-making is a vital element in bringing power closer to the people".[48]

Citizens and communities are increasingly involved in this paradox process of 'depoliticised power devolution' and also the Conservative Party has recently stated its willingness to "Returning Power to Local Communities" (Conservative Party 2009). What are the results of this development on the local and national democratic institutions and practices? Is the United Kingdom really a 'promised land' of citizen participation?

Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the ambiguous character of the idea and practice of citizen participation and of participatory budgeting in the UK context. Whereas the government puts an increasing emphasis on the devolution of power to local citizens and communities, it seems less willing to modify the local and national power centres. Furthermore, the central imposition of the participation- and empowerment agenda, as well as the overall context marked by the existence (and increase) of various public-private partnerships operating

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[48] Cited in Hay, Stoker, Williamson 2008: 6.

outside democratic control, constitute impediments as to a more general democratisation of the political system. How will the situation continue? Will participatory budgeting become no more than a 'governance tool' involving citizens in a depoliticised partnership structure? Will participatory budgeting be restricted to small 'community kitties' or do the current examples pave the way for developing a 'forth way', characterised by more powerful local authorities and participatory structures dealing with more than micro-local concerns and able to empower local citizens? As a recent policy paper shows,[49] the Department for Communities and Local Government is aware of the need to develop a more holistic approach if participatory budgeting is to have a positive effect on democracy:

> "A tokenistic expression of PB is not going to have an effect of any magnitude. The adoption of PB techniques does not lead to quick-fix changes in embedded political, citizen and bureaucratic cultures. (…) Successful participatory budgeting has to be open, supported and tied to salient issues and be set within a broader context and willingness for transformational political change" (CLG 2009: 8).

It needs to be seen if these considerations will have an impact on the future policy practice. At the moment, the policy developments in the UK are oscillating between an increasing participatory and deliberative 'imperative' and an equally, or probably even stronger, emphasis on the establishment of public-private partnerships and the spread of an evaluation culture focusing predominantly on the the efficiency and effectiveness of public policies.

In the next chapter about Germany, a similar, though not as radical, dualism of 'participation' and 'economisation' will be in the centre of attention. Participatory budgeting was actually introduced as part of the New Public Management agenda and has only been linked in a second step to the political spirit of the Porto Alegre process. How has this process been developing over the last years and to what extent does it reflect current trends in the domain of citizen participation in Germany?

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[49] Some of the leading scholars on citizen participation in the UK have carried out the research, amongst others Lawrence Pratchett, Graham Smith, and Gerry Stoker.

Chapter 7

Germany: Participatory budgeting between the citizens' commune and New Public Management reforms

In Germany, the master frame of citizen participation is the citizens' commune [*Bürgerkommune*].[1] The citizens' commune delineates a heterogeneous ideological configuration, which is the result of "frame bridging" (Benford, Snow 2000) between the New Public Management agenda and diverse more 'participatory' orientations, such as communitarianism (Plamper 2000), "cooperative democracy" (Holtkamp, Bogumil, Kißler 2006) and the ideal of a municipal self-government based on an active citizenship (Banner 1998, 1999). Like the proximity approach in France, the citizens' commune can be considered not only as frame of citizen participation, but also as nucleus of a new *référentiel* of local public administration. Rather than having supplemented the previous *référentiel*, the current situation is characterised by a combination of 'new' and 'old' perspectives, of which the concrete combination differs from place to place. The great majority of definitions of the citizens' commune, maybe all, consider that citizen participation should take place in the framework of the existing institutional context of representative democracy in order to make it more open to citizens' claims, but without changing the monopole of decisions of elected representatives.

The emergence of the citizens' commune is related to two developments. First, the 1990s have seen in Germany the introduction of New Public Management reform programmes (or the 'New Steering Model'[2]), which constituted above all an answer to a situation of profound

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[1] The term "Bürgerkommune" has been translated as "citizens' community" (Bogumil, Holtkamp 2004). I think, however, that the translation in terms of "citizens' commune" is more appropriate as the German word *Kommune* does not in the first place refer to the Anglo-Saxon idea of 'community' as group of people unified by a common interest or another common feature, but to the municipality as political and institutional entity.

[2] The ideas of (New) Public Management have been introduced in Germany since 1992. One of the most important initiators and supporters of this development was the main think tank of the German cities' federation (*Kommunale Gemeinschaftsstelle, KGSt*). Based on the experiences of the Duth city of Tilburg, the KGSt developed the 'New Steering Model' as German adaptation of the (Anglo-Saxon) NPM-reforms. The main aim

financial distress of local government. Second, a "boom" of participatory instruments has taken place since the 1990s. It is characterised by the introduction of various participatory devices, as well as by an increased user-orientation within the public administration. It is this new trend, which has led to the emergence of the citizens' commune (Banner 1999, Jann 2002; Plamper 2000).

The citizens' commune concept was co-invented and promoted by a policy 'entrepreneur', Gerhard Banner, who is and has been actively involved in expert networks linked to the introduction of the 'New Steering Model' and who has also introduced and diffused the idea of participatory budgeting in the German context. The model city in this regard was not Porto Alegre, but Christchurch in New Zealand, which won a prize from the Bertelsmann Foundation for public management reforms in the field of "Democracy and efficiency in local government" (1993).[3] This integration of participatory budgeting into expert networks working about the issue of administrative reform largely accounts for the particular way of defining and adopting participatory budgeting to the German context. It is only in a second period that the reference to Porto Alegre was introduced. Participatory budgeting has since then been linked to a more political agenda, but still today many processes do not go beyond a simple consultation of citizens – be it under the official flagship of the citizens' commune or not.

This section will show concretely how a particular policy network has introduced and linked these three elements – NPM reform ideas, the citizens' commune and participatory budgeting – in relation to a particular context. It starts by presenting the historic and juridical framework of citizen participation and democracy in Germany. The second part introduces the more recent developments in the domain of participation and public administration, namely a growing trend towards democratisation and modernisation, as well as the emergence of the citizens' commune as new frame of citizen participation. The third part introduces the

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of the New Steering model is the introduction of decentralised management and organisation structures in public administrations in order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of public service provision and to reduce spending. Besides this orientation on internal management reforms, which has been predominant in the 1990s, the New Steering model contains two other pillars: the increased role of external competition (through public-private partnerships for example), and a greater focus on citizens as service user or clients, for example through feedback/complaint mechanisms and satisfaction surveys (Bogumil 2001: 115).

[3] In Christchurch, "democracy and efficiency" were not only achieved through the reduction of the number of municipalities, but also through the introduction of a new budgetary system, and a discussion with local residents and community groups around an understandable and transparent, annual and pluri-annual budget plan. In the following years, Christchurch became a *best practice*-example in the German debate about management reforms, even though in New Zealand it did not provoke such a level of interest (Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b: 63).

participatory budgeting process and asks who has introduced this process, what the existing examples look like, and how they function.

I. A 'strictly representative' democracy

After World War II, the West German political system was established in a "strictly representative" modus (Böckenförde 1992: 379). Glaeßner explains this orientation of the West German constitution (Basic Law) with reference to the "Weimar Syndrom" and the first experiences of the beginning cold war (Glaeßner 1999: 387). The only element of direct democracy contained in the Basic Law is the territorial referendum (article 29), rarely practiced.[4] With regard to the *Länder*-legislation, only some federal states had introduced referendums in the legislation until the late 1980s, the moment at which this procedure was institutionalised in the whole country (Wollmann 2002: 267).

Historically, the ideas of local citizen participation and of local self-government have a quite long tradition in Germany – particularly when compared to the "belated arrival" of liberal democracy at the national level (Roth 1997: 413). The roots go back to the Prussian Municipal Charter (1808) masterminded by the reformer Freiherr von Stein. Inspired by the French revolution, this charter laid down "a remarkable local self-government model" based on the direct participation of citizens in local matters and the principle of general competence for the municipal council (Wollmann 2000: 44). Due to the existence of an authoritarian state, a highly restricted suffrage and the largely abortive liberal Revolution of 1848, local government had, however, a very "undemocratic basis" throughout the 19th century and was seen as an "essentially apolitical form of local self-administration (...) and even a form of indirect State administration" (ibid: 45). In institutional and juridical terms, this situation changed only in 1919 with the creation of the Weimar Republic.[5]

Despite these political changes, the juridical thinking and terminology of local self-government has been influenced throughout the 20th century by the apolitical and state-led

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[4] One example is the referendum around the Saar-statute (1955) which foresaw a half-autonomous, half European status of the Saarland. With 67,7% the population voted against it, and by 1959 the Saarland was a "full" member of West Germany and "normal" federal state (Luthardt, Waschkuhn 1997: 62-63).
[5] Formally, Hitler did not abolish the main institutions of the Weimar Republic.

vision of local government (Wollmann 2000: 45). It is only since the late 1960s that a "politicisation" of the municipal level occurred. Various local protest movements have increasingly contested council decisions and political parties have discovered this level as area of political and strategic mobilisation (Bogumil 2001: 15).[6] Yet, still today, 'local democracy' is a field of study that is predominantly studied from a legal and institutional point of view (as part of public management studies), rather than in relation to democratic theory. Relating this point to the question of frames, it is interesting to notice that two scholars and practitioners of public management created the concept of citizens' commune: Gerhard Banner, Professor of Public Administration and Director of the main thinktank of the German cities' federation [*Kommunale Gemeinschaftsstelle*, KGSt] from 1976 to 1995; and Gerhard Plamper, Professor of Public Administration and Director of the same institution from 1995 to 1999.

The urban protest movements of the 1960s were part of a broad protest wave. Like in France and other countries, social movements and critical student organisations contested the status quo in the universities, cities and the society at large (as well as international issues like the war in Vietnam) and claimed the right for more influence and participation in political processes (Roth 1998; Gilcher-Holtey 2005).[7] In Germany, the critique of these movements seems to have been quicker incorporated into the system (cf. Boltanski, Chiapello 1999) than in France, for example in terms of legal requirements for participation. Some important laws on participation in urban planning have been already laid down in 1971, 20 years earlier than on the other side of the Rhine.[8]

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[6] Local government constitutes the third and weakest administrative and political tier (consisting of local municipalities, counties, county-free (larger) cities, associations of small villages and various kinds of special purpose units), next to the federal [*Bund*] and state levels [*Länder*]. It officially belongs to the *Länder* legislation, but the principle of municipal self-government is laid down in the Basic Law. Local governments have mandatory functions (general education, welfare for young, subsidised housing construction, construction and maintenance of local roads, sewage disposal, maintenance of a fire brigade) and perform voluntary tasks (athletic and leisure facilities, cultural amenities, care for the elderly, public utilities run by local authorities). Finances represent a mixture of mainly local (property and trade or sales) taxes, parts of 'tax associations' and state grants and fees (Gabriel, Eisenmann 2005: 120-23). Roth contests the idea of a traditionally "strong" role of local self government and sustains that, historically, municipalities could not develop a real power position with regard to the state government (Roth 1997: 413). In a comparative perspective, Germany occupies a medium position with regard to the powerful scandinavic municipalities and the southern European countries characterised by a rather week position of local authorities (Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b: 48)

[7] With regard to the situation in East Germany, where protest movement also existed, see Roth 1998.

[8] As to planning, the most important legislative acts were the 1971 (Federal) Urban Development Promotion Act, (it provides for the right of affected citizens to be listened to and consulted on the planned urban renewal measures) and the 1976 amendment to the Federal Building Act which regulates the so-called preliminary citizen participation in urban planning (Wollman 2002). Roth (1998) has underlined that these laws provided citizens only with a limited influence on decisions, as they had only a consultative voice about selected issues.

Although concerning the national rather than the local level, one should mention in this regard the "active reform policies" of the first Social Democratic/Liberal coalition government elected in 1969. Members of the government realised that their reform activism would face insurmountable difficulties in the present situation of party and interest group competition, high levels of conflict, short-term mobilisations and lack of consensus. This is the reason why they aimed to develop mechanisms of coordination between agencies of the state apparatus, as well as between the state and private actors and organisations (Offe 1981: 130). Already the previous coalition government of Christian and Social Democrats had initiated the *Konzertierte Aktion*, an informal discussion and negotiation forum between state bureaucrats, employers, unions and some interest organisations debating around economic issues after the major recession of the mid-sixties. The new government developed this ('neo-corporatist') approach further and created various channels and platforms for informal and formal discussion and decision-making amongst organisations (including unions, private interest organisations, etc.) and state bureaucrats (ibid: 134).

This new policy orientation was of a highly functionalist, pragmatic and even "non ideological" nature. It did not intend to go beyond the framework of representative democracy and simply aimed at the realisation of certain policy goals: conflict resolution and creation of consensus, obtaining more reliable and predictive knowledge necessary for policy makers, preventing the political process from the influence of short-sighted interest groups, and to carry out the policy programme more effectively (ibid: 135). This pragmatic orientation, based on a constant dialogue between state representatives and private actors (business, interest organisations), stands in complete opposition to the French traditional Republican ideology (the state as supreme regulator representing *l'intérêt générale* against the egoistic perspectives of individual or organised citizens) and the politicised and rather conflict-oriented nature of French political culture.

Moreover, as a federal state with a Parliamentary (and not presidential) form of democracy, Germany has never had the same level of central organisation and planification (and centralist ideology) than France – although there does exist a very positive view of the state in Germany expressed sometimes in the idea of a "father state" (Ferree et al. 2002: 66). Finally, political parties, which are interest organisations *par excellence*, have a very important role. Following the constitution, they are not only involved in elections as in France, but contribute to the formation of the people's political will (clause 21 of Basic Law). In Germany, a "party

democracy" with "people's parties" [*Volksparteien*], political parties are traditionally the main actors in the political field and constitute the main basis for interest aggregation and political decision-making (Glaeßner 1999: 317sq.) – although the constant decline in membership rates increaslingly questions this perspective.[9] The (traditional) predominance of parties, as well as the important role of interest organisations in the policy-making processes, has led to a system that – besides the election of representatives – excludes the direct participation of ordinary, non-organised citizens in the political sphere.

II. A new democratisation cycle

In institutional terms, this system was only marginally modified through the "participatory revolution" (Kaase 1982) of the 1960s and '70s, which provoked the first legal codification of citizen participation (above). A more encompassing process of institutional development and change started only in the 1990s. Like in France, this second period of democratisation has been characterised by a stronger 'top-down' than 'bottom-up' mobilisation, meaning that participatory practices have been initiated by policy makers rather than by citizens themselves.

1) A spread of participatory practices

This second cycle or "participatory boom" (Holtkamp 2006: 185) is characterised by the introduction and diffusion of a large number of participatory practices, particularly at the local level.[10] Never before the 1990s, did citizens in Germany have so many institutionalised

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[9] Membership rates between 1990 and 2008 went down as follows for the two biggest parties: from 943.402 to 515.538 for the SPD; and from 789.609 to 525.019 for the CDU (Süddeutsche Zeitung 20./21.6.2009). 2009 is the first year where the CDU has more party members than the SPD. The membership rate of the smaller parties (Liberals, Green party, Left party) has increased in the meanwhile.

[10] It therefore affirms the important position of municipal politics with regard to citizen participation. For example, "conventional" forms of engagement within the representative system are more developed at the municipal rather than at the federal or national level: people can not only vote or be member of a party, but also participate as 'expert citizens' in the council or within various boards for particular groups of the population. In addition, electoral modalities are more flexible – at least in the municipal legislation of most federal states – and contain a greater influence of citizens on the selection of candidates and party lists through cross-voting of candidates of various lists and the cumulation of votes on several candidates of one list. Second, two thirds of "unconventional" form of engagement in form of civic initiatives and social movement activities concern municipal politics (Roth 2001: 133).

possibilities of influence at the local level (ibid). For instance, different consultative and 'dialogic' participatory procedures were introduced, especially since the second half of the 1990s: round tables, civic forums, mediation procedures, planning cells and agenda 21 processes (their number increased from 100 to 2500 between 1997 and 2002, cf. Herzberg 2008: 81). Second, all federal states (*Länder*) introduced between 1990 and 1997 municipal referendums in their municipal legislation (Jung 1997: 134). [11] This development constitutes a dramatic change with regard to the principle of representative democracy prevailing until then at the local level; at the national level it still persists, although the German Federal President (Horst Köhler) recently proposed to introduce more mechanisms of direct democracy (Mai 2009).

Why did this "boom" take place? Like the first cycle of the 1970s, it can be read as result of incorporated critique, formulated by the 'new' social movements of the 1980s (dealing with questions like the environment and women rights) and other critical actors like the newly founded Green Party. Yet, it is important to highlight the contextual conditions of this 'incorporation' and to be aware that many other factors contributed to this change. A strong impetus for the expansion of participatory rights came for instance from the experience of East Germany's regime collapsing largely through basic democratic movements and actions (ibid: 131). This development had a direct influence on the introduction of municipal referendums in Germany.[12] Together with the country-wide establishment of the 'south German' council constitution during the 1990s, it led to an unexpected alignment of municipal constitutions in a federal state traditionally characterised by considerable variety of local institutional arrangements and participatory practices.

The second important motivation for the expansion of participatory processes was the growing level of 'political discontent' (*Politikverdrossenheit*), elected "word of the year" in 1992 by the Society of German Language. This discontent in the population was especially

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[11] The only exception is the land of Baden-Württemberg where the possibility of organising municipal referendums was introduced in the 1950s. Municipal referendums in Germany contain two stages: the initiative for and the organisation of the (final) referendum. The concrete modalities vary from one federal state to the other (for example with regard to the needed quorum of participants). Most municipal constitutions establish a 'negative list' with aspects excluded from referendums, such as budgetary questions and the internal organisation of the administration (cf. Holtkamp 2006: 188).

[12] The still-existing East German government introduced them in all municipal charters in May 1990, before they were also integrated in most former Western German federal states (the exceptions being Baden-Württemberg as mentioned above and Schleswig Holstein, which introduced municipal referendums by April 2004 as consequence of a corruption scandal).

directed against the "political class" of politicians and parties (Kodolitsch 2002; Gothe, Schleyer, Weber 1997). Concrete indicators of this discontent are similar to other countries. They include the increase of non-voters, declining membership rates of traditional parties and the creation of new ones (Green party 1982; the 'Die Linke' 2007), the rise of populist/ right wing parties, as well as decreasing levels of trust in political parties (Gothe, Schleyer, Weber 1997: 155).

A third important factor is that citizen participation emerged as a "resource" to be exploited (Roth 2001: 137), in a context marked by the increasing financial squeeze of local governments. Since the 1990s, cities have been facing an important financial crisis, which is a result of the increased transfer of 'competences' from the federal to the municipal level without adequate financial support.[13] In this context, citizen engagement was expected to provide the following 'benefits': the takeover of social and cultural services in order to disburden local authorities; the provision of social welfare; and more economic effectiveness in the public sector (ibid: 137-38). Put differently: the debates about citizen participation of the 1990s not only aimed at an increased input legitimacy of participatory practices (like in the 1970s), but also a strong output legitimacy (Holtkamp 2006: 185; Kersting 2004), that is concrete and tangible outcomes in terms of cost reduction and efficiency. The difference between the first and second democratisation cycle also becomes clear when regarding the "keywords" or "discursive fields" during the two periods. In the 1970s, they mainly turned around the (similar) notions of participation and civic/citizen involvement/participation; in the 1990s, several fields have been analysed, for instance around the concepts of political disaffection, civic engagement, citizen/user focus, New Steering Model and citizens' commune (Kodolitsch 2002). It would be interesting to explore in more detail the parallels and differences between these two periods in terms of ideas and institutional practices, also in comparison with other countries like France or Great Britain.

A sign of the more recent 'economic' perspective on participation is the spread of procedures, which conceive citizens in terms of "co-producers" (*Mitgestalter*) of services. Citizen engagement, in this perspective, is increasingly used in order to substitute the municipal provision of services and therefore needs to be seen as inherent part of ongoing Public

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[13] 2003-2004 were the peak years of the crisis, during which many authorities (partly) privatised formally municipal competences (e.g. water and electricity supply), closed municipal 'pleasure' institutions (such as swimming pools) and sold out their "silver-plates" (Jungfer 2005).

Management reforms (Bogumil 2001: 215). Some elements of the "participation trend" of the 1990s therefore belong to the "economisation trend" (Bogumil 2006: 5) or have even emerged on the basis of (economically-oriented) public management reforms.[14] These practical developments can be exemplified with the succession of different frames of citizen participation, or of the consecutive *référentiels* of public policy.

2) A succession of frames and of *référentiels*

German scholars of public administration describe the citizens' commune as a new model [*Leitbild*] for local authorities that comes in addition to the previous dominant models (Banner 1999; Jann 2002; Plamper 2000).[15] In addition, certain 'minority' or 'counter frames' of public policy and citizen participation exist. For instance, it is possible to mention the "activating commune" (Damkowski, Rösener 2002) or the "solidarity commune" developed as clear alternative to the citizens' commune by Herzberg (2008), who is one of the promoters of a more Porto Alegre style participatory budget in Germany (chapter 10). They are nowhere near as widespread as the master frames, but might gain more influence in the future.

Banner (1998) names the first, historic model an "ordering municipality" [*Ordnungskommune*]. Here, the local authority functions as administrative institution [*Behörde*], which should provide security for the inhabitants and assure the correct application of (national) law. This juridical conception of municipalities is predominant in the literature and is still prevalent through the high number of lawyers amongst municipal policy makers. This first, state-centred model represented for a long time the main *référentiel* of public administration, in the sense of providing a basic and coherent structure of policy goals, organisational structure and professional identities.

With the introduction of New Public Management ideas in the beginning of the 1990s, this framework was modified and complemented with new ideas. A new normative model emerged, that of the "service municipality" [*Dienstleistungskommune*]. It is based on

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[14] Bogumil (2006) and others (e.g. Gabriel, Eisenmann 2005) present these trends rather in terms of parallel developments.
[15] Like in parts of the *référentiel* literature, no clear distinction is made by these authors between models as concepts created by the actors themselves, and as ex-post categorisations through the researcher. Whilst the citizens' commune and the service commune are frames of citizen participation in the sense developed here, the first model seems rather to represent an ex-post definition.

economic thinking (New Public Management or 'New Steering Model'), conceives citizens mainly as service users and highlights the need of administrative reforms, as well as of competitive cities. The degree to which the second ideological configuration has been 'put into practice' in Germany is the content of polemic discussions amongst members of the 'modernising community'.[16] The reality provides a heterogeneous picture of more or less 'modernised' public administrations. Some cities transformed their entire way of steering (15%), or intended to do so, but the majority of cities (61,5%) implemented only single aspects of the 'New Steering Model' (Bogumil et.al 2007: 37).[17] This means that in some places, the New Steering Model constitutes a 'sectoral *référentiel*', but that in others the NSM co-exists with the previous (or other) model(s) of public administration. In any case, it does not represent a 'global *référentiel*' like the 'ordering municipality'.

Since the mid-late 1990s, the citizens' commune has represented the third and most recent frame of citizen participation. Generally speaking, it involves a more political argumentation and aims at a greater involvement of citizens and at more social cohesion. Even though the citizens' commune is the master frame of citizen participation today, it is less institutionalised than the 'service commune'. It is a much younger idea than the NSM and therefore seems to exists most often in form of a new policy project (a policy goal and policy discourse) rather than in form of a clearly defined and profoundly rooted political and administrative programme, if not to speak of a *référentiel* of public policies. In a research project about the federal states Baden Württemberg and North-Rhine Westphalia, more than 50% of municipalities indicated that they adopted the official aim of becoming a citizens' commune (Bogoumil, Holtkamp, Schwarz 2003: 83). The initiatives taken to implement this goal, however, vary a lot and usually concern single measures (introduction of a 'citizens' representative', of various participatory mechanisms like forums, surveys, etc.) rather than the introduction of a new policy approach. Few municipalities seem to have engaged a more encompassing process of policy re-orientation based on the citizens' commune as normative model, for instance the cities of Potsdam and the district of Berlin Lichtenberg; the latter city will be the focus of attention in chapter 10. Many political parties in Germany, too, have adopted the idea of a citizens' commune, but do not provide a very detailed definition of it (see Herzberg 2008: 68-69).

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[16] See for instance the debate in dms – der moderne Staat – Zeitschrift für Public Policy, Recht und Management, 2/2008.

[17] The authors show that 92,4% of German municipalities have introduced reform measures during the last years and that the 'New Steering Model' constituted the main normative model in this process.

3) The citizens' commune: combining administrative reform and citizen participation in the framework of representative democracy

Different definitions of the citizens' commune exist, although all definitions – at least those in the academic literature – share a common 'core': the goal of a more user-oriented and reformed administration and of increased possibilities for citizen engagement (Herzberg 2008; Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b). Moreover, they accept the basic division between policy makers and citizens: the latter discuss, co-plan or co-manage, but the former maintain the final decision competence. Those who consider the use of direct democratic means like municipal referendums, see them as a means to enhance the functioning of representative institutions through the creating of stronger links to the citizenry (Banner 1999: 145) and not as part of a general modification of the institutional (representative) framework.

Plamper assures that the implication of citizens to the public decision-making process does not abolish "the right of final decision-making" of elected representatives (Plamper 2000: 30). Banner, in turn, underlines that "not regarding the direct democratic exception [municipal referendums], municipal democracy develops *in the shadow of representation*" (Banner 1999: 161, italics in original). The perspectives vary with regard to their ideological foundation, which can be communitariansm (Plamper 2000),[18] the "cooperative democracy" (Holtkamp, Bogumil, Kißler 2006) or an ideal of local self-management (Banner 1999). The last two positions represent two oppositional poles with regard to the general perspective on citizen participation. They are presented in more detail, because the first one represents the 'spirit' that guided the introduction of participatory budgeting in Germany (although the procedure was put on the political agenda by Banner), and because some individual perspectives in the framework of the German case study can be related to the second one.

The citizens' commune frame by Bogumil, Holtkamp, Schwarz

Jörg Bogumil, Lars Holtkamp and Gudrun Schwarz (2003) present their perspective on the citizens' commune as a "synthesis" of existing approaches. They elaborated this definition in

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[18] Plamper's position shows some similarities with Raffarin's proximity frame (chapter 5) and the community frame of Hazel Blears (chapter 6), namely the emphasis on networks, on the need for direct interaction between people in their neighbourhoods (instead of hierarchical ways of steering), and on the values of community, social capital and friendship. Following Herzberg (2008), the communitarian orientation in the discussions about the citizens' commune is marginal today.

the framework of a research project funded by the Hans Böckler foundation – one of those organisations that accompanied and analysed the introduction of the New Steering model and of participatory budgeting in Germany.

Following the diagnosis of Bogumil, Holtkamp and Schwartz, the current situation of local authorities is characterised by several critical developments.[19] With regard to this situation, the spread of participatory instruments is seen to favour several goals (ibid: 22). Notably, it is expected to

- increase the satisfaction of citizens with local services and planning processes (acceptability);
- favour the engagement of citizens and lead to a "revitalisation" of local democracy (democratisation);
- strengthen social networks between citizens (solidarity);
- provide cost-reductions of public expenditure (efficiency); and
- lead to better outcomes (effectiveness)

The authors follow the explicit aim to deliver a "pragmatic" and "dispassionate" presentation of the "limits and possibilities" of the citizens' commune (Bogumil, Holtkamp, Schwarz 2003: 8). In this undertaking, they focus more on the concerns of policy makers than on the citizens' perspectives (ibid: 8), which is also why they develop a rather top-down perspective on citizen participation. The authors reject a position which sees citizen engagement only from the instrumental standpoint of cost-reduction, because citizens who take over responsibilities (e.g. the self-management of formerly public services) would also require to be heard with regard to other issues (ibid: 24). At the same time, the organisation of these participatory instruments reveals only of the competences of policy makers. They, not citizens, should decide "when, where, about what topic and how citizens can participate" (ibid: 25), because policy makers have to "translate" the results into the policy-making process and to guarantee a good course of the process (ibid: 36).[20] The selected participatory

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[19] They list the financial distress of local government and the legitimacy crisis of representative democracy mentioned above. Moreover, they analyse a steering crisis of traditional regulation mechanisms (money, law), as well as a crisis of societal institutions (family, church..), more flexibility and mobility requirements and the changing values of people who call for different participation possibilities (shorter and more problem-related) (Bogumil, Holtkamp, Schwartz 2003: 16-21).

[20] In another book about the citizens' commune, Holtkamp is also very explicit about this point: "Participation instruments need to be pre-structured by elected representatives and civil servants in order to assure their social

instruments should be consensus-oriented and not deal with issues that raise conflict (ibid: 86).

For instance, the authors enumerate the following possibilities: customer surveys, complaint management, one-stop offices, e-government (citizen as user); volunteering organisations, civic charities, and the transfer of assets (citizen as co-planner); and diverse consultative and 'dialogic' participation instruments as well as boards for particular groups of the population (citizen as contract-giver) (ibid: 25; 39). They do not integrate direct democracy instruments (except the direct election of mayors), but deal with them under the heading of "trends" that have led to the citizens' commune (ibid: 13; 23; see also Bogumil, Holtkamp 2002). Moreover, the authors mention the need to set up more transversal forms of administrative functioning and cooperation, the introduction of a "participation management" within the administration, as well as the delegation of tasks towards the neighbourhood level (Bogumil, Holtkamp, Schwarz 2003: 25).

Following previous publications, this perspective on the citizens' commune represents a mix of direct, representative and "cooperative" democracy (Bogumil, Holtkamp 2002). The term "cooperative" democracy refers to non-legally-prescribed, 'dialogic' and cooperative forms of citizen participation (Bogumil 2001: 212) supposed to complement the institutions of representative democracy. In a later publication, Bogumil, Holtkamp and Kißler have undertaken the attempt to elaborate and specify the theoretical concept of "cooperative democracy" (Holtkamp, Bogumil, Kißler 2006), but its 'spirit' is already present in the 2003-book reviewed here. They present the cooperative democracy as a "realist" approach to democracy, which "in opposition to participatory and deliberative" theories of democracy starts from "realistic assumptions with regard to the willingness and resources of the engagement of citizens" (ibid: 13). Except in the case of the transfer of assets to citizens, it follows a top-down approach to citizen participation. Civic engagement, following this perspective, should take place and be organised in clearly delimitated and controlled borders:

> "The implementation of the results of a participatory process [is] a central task for municipal policy makers, but especially with regard to important questions they should not only formally, but really have the ultimate decision-making competence in order to correct socially selective results of the

balance, sustainability and problem adequacy and in order to initiate learning processes amongst the citizens. Generally speaking one can consider that the elaboration of the participation concept and of the participatory management remain a core task for civil servants and elected representatives" (Holtkamp 2000: 81).

participation process and to coordinate them with general goals of urban development and planning. In addition, the participatory themes should be arranged as such that they do not expect too much of citizens. The engagement therefore deals with small-scale planning and concrete projects" (ibid: 20).

The cooperative democracy constitutes a peculiar mix of realist theories of democracy and deliberative democracy theory. It underlines the need for more citizen participation, communication and dialogue, but starts from realistic premises about civic engagement. Moreover, it conceives citizen participation mainly in form of top-down institutional devices and follows a quite paternalistic approach to civic engagement.

The perspective on citizen participation underlying the "cooperative" democracy theory, as well as the citizens' commune frame related to it, shows some similarities with the proximity-frame presented above. In both cases, policy-makers are the key actors, who not only decide about the set up of a participation process, but also play a key role with regard to the process design and the – potential – transformation of its results into the policy-making process. Elected representatives and civil servants remain always the *maîtres* of decision-making. The underlying ideological assumptions of this version of the citizens' commune are rooted in the "cooperative" democracy and in participatory versions of the New Public Management agenda (citizens as consumers; their participation makes the local administration more effective and perhaps even leads to cost-reductions and efficiency gains). The following table summarises the main dimensions of this frame.

Table 5: 'Citizens' commune' frame by Bogumil, Holtkamp, Schwarz

'Citizens commune' frame	
Developed by	Jörg Bogumil, Lars Holtkamp, Gudrun Schwarz (2003)
Ideological foundation	- User-oriented forms of New Public Management - "Cooperative" democracy
Diagnosis	- Financial crisis of local authorities - Steering crisis - Crisis of societal institutions - Legitimacy crisis of democracy
Prognosis (in political sphere)	- Implementation of consultative participation processes; transfer of assets to citizens - Set up of "participation management" in public administration - More transversal administrative coordination
Goals	- Democratisation of municipal politics

	- More acceptability for local decisions
	- More solidarity between citizens
	- Efficiency gains through cost-reductions for council
	- Better political outcomes (effectiveness-games)
Key features of participatory processes	- Central steering competences for policy-makers
	- no transfer of decision powers (except transfer of assets)
	- open access to all citizens at the local level

The citizens' commune frame by Banner

Banner's argumentation (Banner 1998 and especially 1999) is rooted in the idea(l) of a strong local self-government based on a vivid civil society.[21] It includes arguments from the New Public Management literature, but is also based on political ideas and references from democratic theory (Banner 1998: 181). For Banner, the overarching aim of the citizens' commune is to be a primarily citizen-oriented form of municipal politics, which puts the citizen in the centre of local policy making. He wants citizens to become central "actors" of municipal politics, and not only voters (Banner 1999: 144). This orientation would favour a "democratic style of partnership working" between policy makers and citizens (ibid: 148) and lead to the emergence of a "'horizontal' community governance" (instead of "vertical government") where the state "enables" and "guarantees" local policy-making and not imposes it (ibid: 153). The citizens' commune also has a social aim, that of "maintaining social cohesion". This not only "supports the civic self-organisation in order to give rise to a sense of community [*Gemeinsinn*]", but also constitutes a necessary condition with regard to the maintenance of social services which the state can not afford any more (Banner 1998: 181).

Against the ideal of municipal self-government, Banner sees the situation of municipal politics in very critical terms. Following him, local authorities are often ruled by a "closed society" or a "political-administrative complex" (PAC) (Banner 1999: 135) of local civil servants and politicians. Members of the "PAC" are more dealing with clientelistic issues and

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[21] Banner has written two main articles about the issue. Whilst the first one roots the idea of the citizens' commune more within the discussion around Public Management reforms in Germany and argues for the needs of a really citizen-oriented administration (Banner 1998), the second one discusses it in relation to the topic of municipal self-government [*Kommunale Selbstverwaltung*] and contains a more political definition of it (Banner 1999). It is the second article which I use here in order to stress the differences with regard to the previous conception of the citizens' commune.

party-related "deals" than the concerns of local people. Many see citizens only as potential trouble makers and have a "deeply rooted rejection reflex against citizen involvement" (ibid: 154).[22] This is the reason why citizens' claims are regularly treated with "disdain" (ibid: 147) or in an "unfair" and even "harassing" [*schikanös*] (ibid: 148) manner by members of the "PAC". In addition, Banner criticises the fact that the legal prescriptions to citizen participation within local authorities are often simply disregarded. More specifically, he condemns the missing influence of citizens on the budget plan and allocation, despite the fact that they have a central role for the overall policy orientation and political choices in a municipality. In addition, he criticises the high barriers that exist with regard to direct democratic devices like municipal referendums;[23] these barriers would turn the direct democratic forms into a "*quantité négligeable*" in practical politics (1999: 147).

In order to break with these traditional bureaucratic structures (and mentalities), Banner pursues a double strategy. First, he aims at an administrative reform process that includes both an opening to the market (where necessary – not a blind privatisation policy) *and* a resolute orientation towards the users of services. Second, he postulates the need for a stronger focus on citizens as co-deciders and co-planners in local politics. Concretely, three democratic modalities should be combined and enforced in order to make the citizens' commune a reality (Banner 1999): representative democracy, direct democracy (local referendums), and forms of "cooperative" democracy in the sense of consultative, 'dialogic' and non-statutory forms of citizen engagement; I think, however, that Banner does not share the theoretic and paternalistic assumptions underlying the "cooperative" democracy. The organisation of these various participatory practices would enable the municipal legal principle of the "priority of the citizens' will" to become a reality and to create more "communicative proximity instead of bureaucratic distance" between policy makers and citizens (Banner 1999: 134). This proximity necessitates, though, the formulation of cooperation claims by citizens, as well as the principal willingness of policy makers towards cooperation (ibid: 156-7).

Banner remains silent with regard to the concrete modalities of participatory instruments. He states that the contact between policy-makers and citizens should be based on a cooperation

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[22] Bottom-up approaches of engagement not foreseen in the law would be often perceived as "illegal" by policy makers, as the traditional approach towards local policy-making would be that of the simple enactment of (national) law.
[23] The "negative catalogue" of issues that cannot be dealt with within a referendum and high participation quotas.

with "quasi equal rights" (ibid: 136), but does not specify the concrete scope of local citizen engagement. From his critique of the 'unfair' treatment of citizens by policy makers, one can deduce that he supports instruments that are based on clear responsibilities and an accountability procedure about the results. In addition, he claims that local authorities should have an "information and advice duty" for citizens (ibid: 148). Banner underlines the positive, potential outcomes of municipal referendums (high legitimacy of decision; policy-makers are pushed to a greater dialogue with citizens in order to prevent the organisation of referendums) and demands the simplification of their organisational requirements. As noted above, however, he does not want to abolish the representative framework of democracy. This is also the reason why he does not see the citizens' commune in the tradition of grass-roots democracy [*Rätedemokratie*].[24] Instead, he presents it as a form of "involvement democracy" [*Mitwirkungsdemokratie*], which differs both from radical conceptions of democracy and the classic model of representative democracy (ibid). The ideological roots of Banner's definition of the citizens' commune are a combination of user-oriented versions of the New Public Management and the idea(l) of local self-government (municipalities with a strong autonomy and a vivid local democracy). His perspective is summed up in the following table.

Table 6: 'Citizens' commune' frame by Banner

'Citizens commune' frame	
Developed by	Gerhard Banner (1999)
Ideological foundation	- User-oriented forms of New Public Management - Idea(l) of local self-government (municipalities with high autonomy and vivid local democracy)
Diagnosis	- cities rules by "political-administrative complex" which rejects idea and practice of civic engagement - high practical limits to municipal referendums - Municipal budget not part of participatory instruments
Prognosis	- combination of representative democracy, direct democracy (referendums) and consultative means of engagement - User (and market) oriented reform of administration
Goals	- primarily citizen-oriented form of municipal politics

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[24] In the 1998 article, he defines the term citizens' commune in relation to the idea of "participatory democracy", but does not make the meaning of the latter term precise. He seemingly makes no radical interpretation of the participatory democracy concept, as he writes in the 1999 article that it would "suggest that citizens are granted [*gewähren*] a participation at political decisions, a conception which starts from the idea that elected representatives are subordinate with regard to the citizens who elect them" (Banner 1999: 136). For him, the concept of "cooperative" democracy is more far-reaching in political terms than the idea of participatory democracy.

	- a democratic style of partnership between citizens and policy-makers
	- towards more horizontal forms of interaction between policy-makers and citizens
	- more solidarity between citizens
	- efficiency and effectiveness gains for councils
Key features of participatory processes	- integration of direct democracy as means to ameliorate the functioning of representative democracy
	- a cooperation between policy makers and citizens with "quasi equal rights"

III. The introduction of PB: from New Public Management to Porto Alegre?

Gerhard Banner put the topic of participatory budgeting on the political agenda in Germany and linked it to the new idea(l) of a citizens' commune. Initially, the authors of the other perspective on the citizens' commune (Bogumil et al. 2003) did not consider the process of participatory budgeting (Herzberg 2008: 67). It probably did not fit with their focus on 'small-scale – consensual – not too complicated – not too requiring' types of participation processes. Moreover, Holtkamp (2004) argued that the context of financial crisis of local authorities would provide an extremely limited space for the involvement of citizens and therefore easily provoke the delusion of participants. Over the years, however, and particularly through the direct evocation of the citizens' commune by mayors who initiated a PB process, it has been integrated into the domain of the citizens' commune.[25] Moreover, a new normative and practical reference point has been introduced, the Porto Alegre model. What have been the results of this development?

1) Origins: Christchurch in New Zealand

Banner constitutes one, if not the central 'linking knot' between the ideas of citizens' commune, NPM reforms and participatory budgeting. In 1995, he travelled to the city of

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[25] There does not exist a systematic relation between both features. Only six of 34 cities with a PB process (following the website www.buergerhaushalt.de consulted on 27.7.2009) officially claim to be or to becoming a citizens' commune; these are Erfurt, Much, Berlin Lichtenberg, Bonn, Potsdam and Rheinstetten. In Köln, the mayor has referred to this concept in the framework of an interview http://www.govint.org/german/finterviews.html.

Christchurch (New Zealand), which had won an international prize for its broad reform programme in the domain of local citizen participation and public administration (1993). Inspired by this process, he introduced this model to the network of German 'modernisers' (namely KGSt, the Bertelsmann Foundation, the Hans Böckler Foundation[26]) and actively promoted the idea of a 'participatory budget'. He says that he did not know the Porto Alegre process at that time.[27] The same is probably true with regard to the other German 'modernisers'.

Yet also, once the Brazilian process was known, it was not considered to be a 'model' for Germany. Following one line of argumentation, Porto Alegre is no model for Germany because the overarching aims in the Rio Grande do Sul (the establishment of democratic, municipal self-government) already exists in Germany (cf. Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2009). Following another line of interpretation, Porto Alegre cannot constitute a reference for Germany because the transfer of decision-making competences towards citizens is incompatible with German municipal law.[28] As described in chapter 2, also in Porto Alegre it is the council who takes the final decision. Nonetheless, the *de facto* decision-competence of citizens was probably too radical for German practitioners and 'modernisers', who's thinking during the mid-to-late 1990s was influenced by the normative models of the 'ordering' and the 'service commune'. Following Oliver Haubner from the Bertelsmann foundation, the mere idea of ordinary citizens participating in the set up and allocation of municipal finances constituted a "revolutionary thought" in German circles of public administration and local democracy. "People laughed at us when we presented the idea of a citizens' budget [*Bürgerhaushalt*]", he remembers.

One important diffusion channel for this process was the 'best practice' network "*Kommunen der Zukunft*" ("cities of the future"), created by KGst, Bertelsmann- and Hans Böckler foundations and aiming at the development of different tools for a more efficient and citizen-oriented public administration. In 1998, members of the network set up a working group about participatory budgeting, directed by the city of Rheinstetten, one of the first German cities that implemented a PB process. This network played a central role in the definition and diffusion of participatory budgeting in Germany during the first period (roughly from 1998 to

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[26] This ist he foundation of German trade unions.
[27] Personal email, 26.2.2009.
[28] Interview with Oliver Haubner, Bertelsmann foundation, 11.9.2008.

2004). The process criteria developed by these organisations – information, consultation, accountability – influenced the implementation of participatory budget institutions in Germany (Bertelsmann Stiftung, Hans-Böckler Stiftung, KGSt 2001; Bertelsmann Stiftung und Innenministerium des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen 2004). Bertelsmann was directly involved in organising a 4-year pilot project about PB in cooperation with the federal state of North-Rhine Westphalia (2000-2004). Most, if not all PB examples of the first period share similar traits, which come close to the procedural ideal-type "consultation of public finances" developed by Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke (2008b).[29]

2) An "information tool for the council"

Many, if not all of the first examples of PB in Germany reflect the definition of the three main 'players' just mentioned. They frame the process in terms of a consultative device, which functions as an "information tool for the council":

> "Participatory budgeting serves as an aid for the decision-making of politicians (no exclusive decision-making competence [*Alleinentscheidung*] for citizens); it is not meant to undermine representative democracy; it is an information tool for the council and contains the possibility [for councillors] to ensure [*gewährleisten*] citizens the involvement and participation to the budgetary planning process" (Bertelsmann Stiftung; Hans-Böckler Stiftung, KGSt 2001: 15).

This perspective is clearly rooted in the New Public Management agenda: the participation of citizens is a "tool" of participation, which "informs" policy makers about the perspectives of citizens, but does by no way challenge the framework of representative democracy. Politicians play a key role in this process. They "ensure" citizens the possibility to get involved in budgetary discussions. In turn, they get "decision help" (ibid: 6) from citizens, to whom they "listen to" (ibid: 7). Thereafter, the council decides "*possibly* (meaning if the *council* judges it *appropriate*) to integrate the modifications and/or additional propositions which emerged during the consultative process, into the budget" (ibid: 16; highlighted by A.R.).[30]

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[29] See table 2 in chapter 4.
[30] A similar perspective is formulated in another official brochure. Here, the aims of PB are presented as follows: "transparency for citizens over the budget and the budgetary planning; to ensure the participation of citizens and thereby a better dialogue between citizens, politicians and civil servants; to generate support for the decision-making of politicians via the consultation of citizens" (Bertelsmann Stiftung, Innenministerium NRW 2004: 9).

For some actors, participatory budgeting is even not at all related to democratic or political questions, but is a mere information device for policy makers. Such has been the perspective of the treasurer in the city of Hilden, expressed in the answer to the protest letter of a resident:

> "The subject 'municipal *Bürgerhaushalt*' has nothing to do with petitions for a referendum [*Bürgerbegehren*], local agenda 21 processes or similar procedures. In this project, the aim is to present the financial situation of a city in a readable and understandable way" (cited in Brangsch, Brangsch 2005: 82).

This 'technical' vision of participatory budgeting differs from more political positions, e.g. that of Gerhard Banner. For him, a process like participatory budgeting should not only lead to more transparency of public finances and increase the legitimacy of political decisions and of politicians, but provide citizens with "the chance to influence municipal politicians and to change priorities" (Banner 1998: 6).

The practice of participatory budgets during the first period (1998 to 2004) did not reflect this position, but rather the 'spirit' of the citizens' commune as defined by Bogumil et al. (2003). From this perspective, it is not surprising that participatory budgeting in Germany has been (and is) no merely leftwing phenomenon like in France, Spain and Italy, but has been initiated by parties of the left and right of the political spectrum.[31] In the first period, policy-makers tended to dominate public meetings (they spoke most of the time, meetings were prepared only within the administration, etc.) and the logic of 'selective listening' was clearly present. Even if policy-makers were accountable for their decisions, the overall logic of meetings was that of a top-down information meeting (Herzberg 2008: 184). The results of these projects were quite limited. They did not involve a broad participation, nor had they any far-reaching administrative results (Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b: 179-80). They were mainly a means to render the public finances more transparent and to engage a dialogue about it between citizens and policy-makers.

3) A new development – towards new processes?

A more political perspective has gained in influence over the last years. The main external trigger in this regard has been the importation of the Porto Alegre process. At the beginning

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[31] See overview in Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke (2005, 2008). In 2005, 10 PB processes existed in Germany.

of the new millennium, the Porto Alegre reference was introduced to the German context through actors involved in projects of North-South cooperation and democratisation (the association 'Kate e.V.' and the organisation 'Kommunen der einen Welt'[32]), as well as through academic scholars (Herzberg 2001). The Brazilian model brought more political arguments to the debate. Whilst only expert networks were dealing with the issue during the first period, civil society groups and activists have been more and more actively involved in the diffusion of this process. In 2009, an association in the city of Gütersloh has even initiated a petition for a referendum (called 'citizen initiative', *Bürgerbegehren*], which, if successful, would constrain the council to organise a 'citizens' decision' [*Bürgerentscheid*] about the implementation of a participatory budgeting process in the city.[33] Several years earlier (2005), members of the agenda 21 office in the city of Leipzig elaborated, together with a group of 22 randomly selected citizens, a budget report that contains expenditure and saving priorities.[34] In the district of Berlin Lichtenberg, civil society activists put the topic on the political agenda and were actively involved in the designing of the procedure (see case study in chapter 10). In the city and federal state of Hamburg, the procedure involved internet-based discussion forums[35] about the priorities of the municipal budget and of possibilities for saving money. Participants not only discussed, but elaborated 38 concrete project proposals (Herzberg 2008: 175sq).

These developments seem to leave behind them the perspectives and guidelines of the foundations that dominated the first period of PB in Germany. Their rather narrow perspective, as well as the limited results of the 'first generation PBs', seem to belong to the past. New actors have entered the 'scene' of participatory budgeting in Germany. Rather than being a project initiated by the mayor, participatory budgeting is more and more put on the political agenda by small parties (e.g. the Green party or civic lists) who thereby put the big ruling parties under pressures (e.g. in Köln): "If they [ruling parties] do not want to appear as

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[32] The organisation 'Kommunen der einen Welt' published a large number of copies of a broshure about the Porto Alegre model (Inwent GmbH et al. 2002). Kate e.V. organised a round trip of two Porto Alegre politicians in Germany. Five of the 18 cities visited organised thereafter a PB process (Herzberg 2008: 147).

[33] See http://www.buergerhaushalt.org/kommunen/guetersloh-buergerbegehren-fuer-buergerhaushalt/

[34] The report, which has been elaborated independently from the administration, did not provoke any comment from the city administration. After a discussion process with the newly elected mayor (2006), the agenda office has declared that it will organise a new process, this time in close cooperation with the administration (Herzberg 2008: 180-81).

[35] The use of the internet in the framework of participatory budget processes becomes more and more popular in Germany (cf. Herzberg 2008: 174sq). A quite new development is also the link established between PB and Gender Mainstreaming, which is the current project in the city of Freiburg (a similar project in Berlin Lichtenberg has so far remained at the level of a new discourse).

opponents to democracy they have to support the project".[36] Since 2002, an organisation working in the domain of North-South cooperation (*Servicestelle der Einen Welt*) has organised a yearly discussion meeting. This diffusion of the idea and practice of PB is furthermore supported by a new internet platform (www.buergerhausahlt.org). The platform contains basic information about PB, a map with all current examples (planned, existing, established and cancelled processes) as well as short presentations of existing procedures, current information/events and some criteria for measuring the quality of PB examples.

Despite these developments in direction of a more 'political' approach and ameliorations with regard to the role and influence of citizens in the process, one fundamental feature remains identical between the two periods: in the great majority of cases, citizens do not make decisions about public spending priorities of the municipal budget, or limited parts of a budget. They are involved in developing project proposals or spending priorities, but they have no direct impact on decisions.[37]

In the majority of cases, the argument that German municipal law does not allow a decision of other actors than elected representatives seems to impose itself like a golden rule. As far as I know, no politician has so far dared to propose that elected representatives remain the final referees, but do *de facto* take over propositions made by citizens or engage a 'serious' discussion with citizens about the priorities of public spending. Is it the context of financial distress and saving constraints, which explains this orientation? Is it related to the possibility that participatory budgeting in Germany represents above all a tool of political city marketing (Herzberg 2008: 185)? Or is it due to the fact the master frame of citizen participation is the citizens' commune, which even in the more 'participationist' definitions does not fundamentally challenge the existing division of labour between elected representatives and citizens?

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[36] Interview with Gerhard Banner, 26.2.2009.
[37] One exception in this regard is the Berlin district of Marzahn-Hellersdorf, where citizens can decide on a small-grant fund. Interestingly, the origin of this procedure lies not in Germany, but in the city of Salford and represents a case of bilateral transfer: a trainee in the Berlin district came from Salford, and he established a link between both cities. The mayor of Marzahn-Hellersdorf travelled himself to Salford, where PB is carried out in form of a small grant-spending event (see chapter 9).

Conclusion

In Germany like in France and the UK, the adoption of participatory budgeting was largely influenced by features of the institutional and political context, namely the NPM agenda and the spread of participatory devices. It is only in a second period, after the importation of the Porto Alegre reference, that participatory budgeting has been linked to a more political discussion. I argued that despite some procedural ameliorations due to this development, the power of citizens did not significantly increase. The citizens' commune, even in its more political interpretations, provides the normative model of this perspective and policy practice. In the framework of the citizens' commune, citizen participation is always supposed to take place "in the shadow of representation" (Banner 1999: 161). This means that the influence of participants depends on the political will of the official organisers to cooperate with citizens, and on the organisational and argumentative strength of citizens in the procedure. Consequently, participatory budgeting in Germany constitutes a more formalised practice than the "communicative power" Habermas (1992) thought of; but it does not modify the division of power between elected representatives and citizens.

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The last chapters have provided an overview of the introduction and implementation of participatory budget institutions in France, Germany, and Great Britain, as well as of the respective national contexts. In all cases, the process of diffusion has been filtered through various direct and indirect channels, committed 'policy entrepreneurs' as well as actor networks, who interpreted the procedure in a specific way and in some cases contributed to the elaboration of a specific process type, which through internal network activities became a 'typical' process within the national borders. Particularly Germany and the UK show developments of this kind.

The last chapters have also involved different frames of citizen participation and provided insights into the process of frame creation and diffusion. Frames of citizen participation are created by social actors, who summarise and express ideas or concepts that are already 'floating' more or less explicitly in the public sphere (particularly the case of the proximity

frame and the citizens' commune). They become dominant through the active use and 'promotion' of influential or powerful policy actors (proximity and participatory democracy in France), through their diffusion by networks or their use by a certain number of 'local' policy makers (citizens' commune). Frames of citizen participation can express certain features of the national political context (proximity democracy, citizens' commune, community), but are not 'fixed' entities and change their meaning over time. Each frame is based on a specific idea combination (e.g. the close combination, and mutual reinforcement, of participation and administrative reform for the citizens' commune), but the different models also overlap with each other. The community frame of Hazel Blears, for instance, shares with the participatory democracy frame of Porto Alegre an emphasis on power transfer. In contrast to the 'Brazilian' frame, however, she restricts the domain of public involvement to particular, clearly defined issues at the micro-local level. In the conclusion, I will further develop this comparison of similarities and differences between frames and provide a more systematic picture, which also integrates the process of participatory budgeting.

The next, third part leaves the 'macro' level of the state and introduces three in-depth case studies of the local implementation of participatory budgeting: in the Poitou-Charentes region, in an area in the city of Salford and in Berlin Lichtenberg. The analysis will focus, amongst others, on the following questions: Do frames of citizen participation influence the adoption and functioning of participatory budgeting institutions, and if yes how? What other factors influence the implementation of a PB process? Are these procedures innovative in the sense of a process that increases the influence of citizens in the making of public policies?

PART III

From frames to processes? The adaptation of three participatory budget institutions to a new political context

Chapter 8

Towards a participatory democracy? The 'High school participatory budget' in Poitou-Charentes

The 'High school participatory budget' (*Budget participatif des lycées*) in Poitou-Charentes is not a typical case in France, but an exception. Unlike the majority of procedures that exist in this country, not only participants have direct decision-making competences over considerable amounts of money (overall, 10 million euros per year), but the process also shows indirect effects on regional education policy. Moreover, it has provoked a profound modernisation of the department dealing with high schools.[1] It even appears as if the administrative results were more important than the political ones, despite the clear political emphasis of the organisers. How is it possible to explain this situation?

The keys to understanding this exceptional case are threefold. First, it is linked to the frame of citizen participation that guided the implementation of the procedure: participatory democracy. The regional president Ségolène Royal introduced participatory democracy as a new concept into the political agenda of this region and claimed that she wanted to break with the existing practices of citizen participation in France and the then master frame of citizen participation, proximity democracy.[2] Her close collaborators, two long-standing leftwing activists, used this 'window of opportunity' in order to implement a politically far-reaching (innovative) process, one that provides citizens with the right to vote upon considerable amounts of money and that involves all members of the high school community. Second, the power position of Royal and the collaboration of two leading actors in the regional administration assured the implementation of the process against the political opposition from regional politicians, local and national organisations or institutions and members of the high

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[1] The term 'high schools' covers different types of secondary institutions: general and/or technical high schools, professional high schools (e.g. maritime professional high schools or those with an agrarian orientation) and institutions for specific education (EREA, *Ecoles régionales d'enseignement adapté*).
[2] See chapter five.

school community. Third, once implemented, the procedure deployed a distinct dynamic and led to unexpected results. The need for the administration to answer rapidly the demands that emerged during the participatory meetings, to provide adequate cost estimates and to realise quickly the voted schemes put the administration under enormous pressure and provoked a far-reaching administrative reform process, which even provoked a changed of the *référentiel* of the regional education policy.

In the following pages, the development, functioning and results of the 'High school participatory budget' will be presented in detail. The first part introduces the main involved actors, as well as the process of procedural invention that represents a a *bricolage* of normative, political and pragmatic aspects. The second and third part investigate the results of this participatory instrument and discuss its degree of political innovation.

I. The development of an original project of citizen participation under the flagship of participatory democracy

"Everything started with Ségolène..."[3] – without the person and strong political will of Royal, there would probably exist no participatory budgeting process in Poitou-Charentes today.[4] Moreover, the idea of participatory democracy would have never reached such an influence in the French political debate. At the end of the year 2002, during a speech at the National Assembly, Royal referred for the first time to this concept in an official setting and proposed to integrate the principle of participatory democracy into the French constitution. Her journey to the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre several months earlier seems to have constituted an important 'idea trigger' in this regard, since Royal had only slightly earlier not sustained the initiative to change the title of the 'law on proximity democracy' voted by the Jospin government (2002) into 'law on participatory democracy' (Sintomer, Röcke, 2006). Royal's emphasis on participatory democracy matched, however, her political profile, which is based on a marked distance to the political apparatus of the Socialist party. She probably also chose this concept in order to mark a strategic difference to the then master frame of proximity

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[3] Interview with Sophie Bouchet-Petersen, special advisor of Ségolène Royal, 12.2.2008.
[4] Poitou-Charentes is one of the most sparsely populated regions in France. It has around 1,778 million inhabitants (2008) a surface of about 25.810 km², and is subdivided into four *départements (*Charentes, Charentes-Maritime, Deux-Sèvres, and Vienne), one of which is located at the coasts of the Atlantic Ocean (Charentes-Maritimes). The capital city of Poitou-Charentes is Poitiers with 83.000 inhabitants.

democracy, supported mainly by the Prime Minister (and former President of the Poitou-Charentes region) Jean-Pierre Raffarin.[5]

In this initial phase, which roughly lasted until the Presidential elections of 2007, Royal followed a quite far-reaching discourse about participatory democracy. It was close to the French academic literature about the topic, based on a critique of proximity democracy and underlined the need to include citizens into the making of public policies (Ginioux 2008: 13). After the successful regional elections of 2004, which put an end to 16 years of conservative government in the Poitou-Charentes region, Royal aimed to put her electoral, participatory programme into practice and started by initiating a participatory budgeting process, the 'High school participatory budget'.[6]

Several years later, during the 2007-08 Presidential elections, Royal's discourse at national level considerably changed and she largely abandoned the academic discourse of the first period (noch such development took place at local level, in the Poitou-Charentes region). Defending herself against the accusation of populism, for instance the proposition to set up randomly elected citizen juries, and other criticisms, she affirmed the final decision competences and legitimacy of elected representatives in participatory processes (ibid: 28). The initial emphasis on the necessary association of citizens to the decision-making process was therefore replaced by a "rhetoric of consultation that aims to enlighten the final choice of elected representatives" (ibid: 45) – an orientation that also impregnates her internet site 'Désir d'avenir' and the participatory meetings of the regional (2004) and Presidential (2007) election campaign.

Despite the overall importance of Royal as to the origins of the participatory budgeting process in Poitou-Charentes and the spread of the participatory democracy frame in French public debate, two persons have had a decisive influence on the concrete designing of the participatory budget process: Sophie Bouchet-Petersen, 'special advisor' of Royal, and Marc Fischer, senior civil servant in the regional administration.[7] Both are long-standing, left-wing

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[5] See chapter 5.
[6] Under the heading of participatory democracy, the electoral programme mentioned also the set up of citizen juries (the first was organised in 2008) and the introduction of referendums (not introduced until today).
[7] Furthermore, a small, but very active team in the regional administration supports the process. Since 2006 exists the position of 'representative' (*chargé de missions*) for participatory democracy in the region. It is occupied by a former student of Professor Yves Sintomer, who himself played an important role in the process development through interventions at conferences and study days organised by the regional executive.

activists. For Bouchet-Petersen and Fischer, the victory of Royal at the 2004 regional elections and her emphasis on participatory democracy can be seen as a 'window of opportunity' to set up a process that reflects their political convictions. Whilst Bouchet-Petersen brought into the process development her broad philosophic knowledge, Fischer had a broad experience of and was well connected to the regional high school community. A short presentation of the political background of these two persons, based on interview data, provides an original perspective on some aspects of the French, left-wing political tradition. Moreover, it is part of the presentation of several 'PB actors' in Europe, which I will pursue in the following chapters. Thereafter I will present Bouchet-Petersen's frame of participatory democracy, because she has been and still is the main 'thinking head' with regard to the process invention and development (although she and Fischer share very similar perspectives).

1) From revolution to reform: the political background of the two main 'designers' of the participatory budgeting process

Sophie Bouchet-Petersen is an old political and personal fried of Royal, but followed a quite different political development.[8] Born into a catholic and Gaullist family in 1949, Bouchet-Petersen entered a Trotskyite party at the age of 17 (*Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire*, which later was transformed to the *Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire*). A few years later, she became member of the party's central committee, which she left in 1978. As a student of philosophy at Nanterre University in Paris, she was part of the "Mouvement du 22 Mars" (1967) which lead to the 68-movement. In the 1970s, she was very active in the feminist movement (within neighbourhood initiatives and economic enterprises) and interested in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Like many other left wing activists in France, she passed between 1978 and 1981 "progressively from revolution to reformism", attracted by the possibility of entering the newly elected government. After the election of François Mitterand in 1981, she worked on the problems of small and medium-sized enterprises, first in the Ministry of Industry, then directly within the *Elysée* where she met Ségolène Royal. In 1988, she became cultural

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[8] This and the following presentation relies on the interviews with Bouchet-Petersen (12.2.2008) and Fischer (7.2.2008 and 3.10.2006). Direct citations from the interview transcript are marked with " ". Where possible, I counter-checked the information taken from the interviews. The overall account, however, reflects the personal presentation of these two people.

advisor of Mitterrand and entered in 1990 the *Conseil d'Etat*, an institution that advises the government and has to be consulted on projects of law. Three years later she participated in the creation of "Droit de cité", a network composed of different actors (activists, musicians, intellectuals, etc.), which works on the topic of deprived neighbourhoods. In 1998, she entered the Cabinet of Royal, nominated as Minister for education. Two years later, she followed her into the Cabinet of the Family Ministry.

Despite the quite different political development and perspectives of Royal and her collaborator, Bouchet-Peterson holds in high esteem Royal's "atypical" way of doing things and her distance towards the practices and habits of the Socialist party apparatus:

> "She [Royal] was completely atypical... I mean she had taken all the knowledge and know how which is part of this educational career, but strangely she had escaped from conformism. In the *Elysée*, this became visible when (...) on a subject of society or a political issue, she not only looked for the opinion of experts, of ministers (...), but also integrated the reactions of people she had talked to 'in the field', ordinary citizens (...). For the others this was scandalous. I found it interesting. Otherwise, we did not have at all the same *parcours* (...), there was no a priori complicity. But this capacity of reeling in (...) the 'voice of the people' (...) this is what I found interesting."

After working in the Family Ministry she joined the Cabinet of the State Secretary of *Outre-Mer* and worked on another topic of interest: slavery, colonialism, equality and diversity in the French Republic. During this time, she always maintained a personal and working relation with Royal, for example about the topic of participatory democracy (she had also travelled to Porto Alegre in the beginning of the new millennium, but not together with Royal). When the Left lost the Presidential elections in 2002, she joined the cabinet of Jean-Paul Huchon (President of the region Ile de France) with the project of initiating several participatory experiments – 'participation of the working class' and 'democratic renewal' being another topic of interest for her. Disappointed by the poor results of the initiatives, she joined Royal in the region of Poitou-Charentes as special advisor (2004). Looking for partners within the regional administration with whom to initiate the new project of participatory budgeting, she got to know Marc Fischer, leading civil servant, and both immediately sympathised with each other.[9]

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[9] Initially, Bouchet-Petersen had also contacted the director of the administrative services dealing with the construction works in high schools. This person, however, situated on the conservative side of the political spectrum, was not convinced of the participatory budgeting initiative and maintained a sceptical perspective until he left his position in the beginning of the year 2008.

Like Bouchet-Petersen, Fischer has a background that is marked by a shift from 'radical' positions to a more reformist orientation. Born 1954 in the Franche-Comté region, Marc Fischer became a member of the Socialist Party at the age of seventeen. The four preceding years (the last four years of high school), he received a catholic education at a private school. Towards the end, he broke up with the church as an institution, as he was revolting against the fact that ideas and convictions "get lost" or are even turned into their contrary within a big organisation or institution. In these days, a police officer stopped him on the streets of Besançon while he was distributing the revolutionary journal *La cause du peuple* together with a priest.[10] He says that the revolt against narrow-minded and dogmatic ways of thinking and institutions remained an important dimension throughout his life.

Fischer studied law in the city of Besançon. In 1977, he started working as a "technical manager" (*gestionnaire*) of a secondary school (*collège*) in the city of Champagney (Department Haute-Saône). In 1983, he passed a national qualifying examination (*concours*) and became a technical and accounting manager of several secondary schools in the city of Bressuire (Department Deux-Sèvres, region of Poitou-Charentes). He stayed there throughout the following 20 years, co-organising user-oriented reform processes in the administration of the high schools he was working in and being actively involved in the trade union of employees of the education system.[11] Starting as a grassroots activist, he became secretary and member of the national executive group in 1992. In this function, he was co-responsible for the national commission about school institutions. During the 1990s, this commission was involved in all discussions and decisions about secondary schools and high schools in France and had therefore direct links to the regional executive of the Poitou-Charentes region and the national Ministry of Education. It was in these days that Fischer met Ségolène Royal, then Minister of Education (1997-2000).

In 2004, Fischer was actively involved in the discussions about the decentralisation laws. In this framework, he joined the regional administration of Poitou-Charentes. After being 'recruited' by Bouchet-Petersen as collaborator for the participatory budget project, he was appointed director of the administrative service dealing with "life within high schools" (one

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[10] "La cause du people" is the journal of the maoist group "Gauche prolétarienne" founded in 1968 in France. Officially forbidden in 1970, several members continued their activism through "La cause du people" until 1976 (whilst the group auto-dissolved in 1973). In 1971, Jean-Paul Sartre decided to become the journal's director in order to prevent it from being forbidden by the authorities.

[11] It is called SNIEN (*Syndicat national des intendants de l'éducation nationale*) and became the "Administration and Intendance"-union in 1994.

of the two administrative services in the department dealing with high schools). In 2008, he also took over the service dealing with construction works, which is why he is today the only director with regard to all high school related matters, except pedagogical issues (content of school lessons, number of school hours, etc.) that remain under the competences of the national Ministry of Education.

In response to the question of where his interest in participatory practices originally came from, Fischer answered by saying "I think it comes from...from what I am". This answer points to the importance of political idea(l)s during his political and professional practice career, an aspect that does also 'apply' to Bouchet-Petersen. She has been the main 'thinking head' of the participatory budget procedure and has a quite clear conception of what participatory democracy means to her (many aspects of the following presentation are also shared by Fischer).

2) The participatory democracy frame of Bouchet-Petersen

The idea of power division constitutes the heart of the participatory democracy frame of Bouchet-Petersen. It is the "experience of the division of power"[12] that is the only means to (re)interest people for the political world, and especially those of lower social strata. Bouchet-Petersen is scandalised by the poor quality of most of the existing participatory processes in France. She criticises the dominance of middle-class citizens and of white and elderly people, whilst young persons and immigrants are largely absent. In addition, there would be simply no "stake"[13] [*enjeu*] in many procedures, as they are only consultative or concern extremely small amounts of money. This is why some procedures would represent "enormous gas factories", in the sense of complex procedures and a largely developed rhetoric around participation – but without any real stake for citizens.

Besides the fact that these processes lack any political interest, they also discourage the participation of members of the working-class, because "only members of the middle-class can lose their time for meetings without a stake". The most important goal is therefore to

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[12] Intervention of Bouchet-Petersen during an internal evaluation seminar about participatory devices in the Poitou-Charentes region, 20.3.2009.

[13] The terms and sentences marked with " " without further specification of the author are citations from the interview with Bouchet Petersen, 12.2.2008.

involve those people who usually do not participate, and especially "working class members" [*participation populaire*]. The "non-monopoly of the middle-class in the political expression" and the participation of those members of the society who "are less likely to participate spontaneously" constitute basic guidelines of a participatory democracy. A "really" participatory process should at least incorporate two elements: a "real stake" for participants through a division of powers, and a broad participation including members of the working class. Only through such a process, it would be possible to reach the central political aim of "reinvigorating the civic spirit" [*raviver le civisme*]. The deliberative quality of participatory instruments is much less important in this regard.[14]

It is specifically with regard to the aim of power division, which lies also in the centre of the Porto Alegre participatory democracy frame, that the influence of Bouchet-Petersen (and Fischer) on the process design has been decisive. Apparently, Royal was initially not convinced by the fact that people should really make decisions.

> "She [Royal] didn't want to hear the word 'vote'. Therefore, during the first year we didn't know...we didn't dear to say that this is a voting bulletin. Because for her this didn't cope with the idea she had of the process".[15]

It was only after she had been to several of the meetings that Royal officially agreed with the idea of the 'transfer' of decision-making competences. Like in Porto Alegre, this transfer of power does not pre-empt the political executive from its official decision-making competence. People establish a vote, but politicians have the final say about the integration of this vote to the political process. Unlike the German examples mentioned in the last chapter, however, the elected representatives in Poitou-Charentes usually 'take over' the propositions made by citizens (unless they are not feasible, dangerous or outside their domain of competences), which is why the latter become a *de facto* decision-making competence.

Bouchet-Petersen sees the direct participation of citizens as a necessary complement to the existing representative institutions, but not as something that should replace them. The idea is to re-integrate the participatory dimension of democracy, "forgotten" over the last centuries, into the modern institutions in order to strengthen the role and influence of ordinary citizens

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[14] This position was clearly formulated during the internal evaluation seminar already mentioned.
[15] Interview with Marc Fischer, 3.10.2006.

and to help (or force) elected representatives to better fulfil their duties. The notion of power division represents the most radical challenge to a narrow conception of representative democracy, as well as to the proximity frame by Raffaring presented in chapter 5. "For us", Bouchet-Petersen says,

> "real participatory democracy is a democracy which reaches a real division of power (...); otherwise you deal with the consultation of citizens, you listen to them, you are 'close' to them...all things which are necessary. But for real participation there needs to be a moment of decision taking, or at least of impacting decisions."

Furthermore, she stresses the importance of clear rules that specify the role and influence of all involved actors, although the process itself should not "become like a fetish". Instead, the instruments, and the idea, of participatory democracy need to be continuously developed further and adapted to the local conditions. The conception of participatory democracy by Bouchet-Petersen (and Fischer) has indeed evolved over the last years. In addition to the initial impetus on the transfer of direct decision-making powers to citizens, the idea of a more indirect role on the decision-making process emerged over the years. It reflects the development of other participatory instruments after the PB process, namely (since 2008) participatory *ateliers* on specific themes and a citizen jury about climate change.[16] These procedures involve citizens in the decision-making process (they present their proposals during a session of the regional Assembly) and require politicians to be accountable, but do not confer citizens with a direct power of decision.

Despite the strong impetus on the idea of power sharing, the participatory democracy frame by Bouchet Petersen does not integrate the idea of "self-regulation", an aspect that occupies a central position in the 'Brazilian' frame. Consequently, the organisers of the 'High school participatory budget' independently determine its rules, cherry picking proposals from participants (expressed through evaluation sheets or during evaluative meetings). Despite some recent modifications in this regard,[17] the exclusion of participants from the process design is peculiar with regard to the otherwise quite radical political perspectives of Bouchet-Petersen – although one might wonder if this sort of participatory democracy is everything that

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[16] In addition, a 'participatory fund' for private high schools was implemented, as well as an electronic citizen assembly organised in cooperation with the regions of Tuscany and Catalonia (November 2008). The latter procedure was not initiated or managed by Bouchet-Petersen, but by the special advisor on participatory democracy in the region. It did not have an impact on the regional decision-making process (Talpin 2009).

[17] They organised, for example, an evaluation seminar with voluntary participants in the course of the year 2008.

remained from the revolutionairy dreams of the 1960s…. The reluctance to a greater role of self-determination by participants is possibly the result of two, interrelated, aspects. First, the influence of the French Republican idea(l) of equal treatment, which always necessitates a central steering organism, centrally determined rules (same rules for all) and of a sort of 'state control' of the 'good' functioning. A second factor that probably comes into play is the fear from the side of the organisers to see this (disturbing) process 'alienated' by oppositional high school officers who would try to manipulate a self-regulated procedure.

There are two further differences between the Porto Alegre and Poitou-Charentes participatory democracy frame. One can mention, first, the more 'reformist' orientation of Bouchet-Petersen with regard to the radical conception in Porto Alegre. Whereas the former perspective aims at a democratisation of high schools and a greater inclusion of disadvantaged groups of the population, the latter theorises a "social control of the state" and an "inversion of priorities". This aspect points in direction of the second aspect, the social dimension. Whereas the political and social dimension in the Brazilian frame are closely connected and interrelated with each other, Bouchet-Petersen's participatory democracy frame is primarily a political one, aiming at the transfer of power to ordinary citizens and thereby at a democratisation of the existing system. It involves a social dimension, namely the emphasis on working class participation and more redistributive justice. However, it is not primarily organised around a social agenda, but a political one (that includes social aspects). This position is summed up in the following table.

Table 7: 'Participatory democracy' frame of Bouchet-Petersen

'Participatory democracy' frame	
Formulated by	Sophie Bouchet-Petersen
Ideological foundation	An overall, post-authoritarian left wing orientation
Diagnosis	- Widespread disinterest for public issues
	- Poor quality of existing participatory instruments
Prognosis	- Give people a 'stake' in political process, i.e. through participatory instruments
Goals	- Raise interest for public issues, "revive citizen spirit"
	- Create participatory processes with a stake for participants
	- Satisfy needs of hitherto disadvantaged groups of actors
	- Ameliorate functioning of representative democracy through fostering of citizen participation (more redistributive justice)
Key features of	- Division of power

| participatory processes | - Broad and inclusive participation (especially of lower income groups) |
| | - Existence of clear rules; 'fluid' participatory instruments |

3) A process of creative frame implementation or *bricolage*

How have these ideas been put into practice? The invention of the 'High school participatory budget' was not a process of a simple 'idea implementation', but of a 'bricolage' that involved procedural, political and ideational considerations. In the words of Fischer, he and Bouchet-Petersen (with some other civil servants in the regional administration) "invented the process in the process of its implementation".[18] The following figure provides a picture of this process.[19]

Figure 4: Implementation of a frame of citizen participation through *bricolage*

| Frame (participatory democracy) |
| Frame definition of process designers |

External factors (institutional/political context)   'Internal' factors (actors' perspective)

B
R ➢ Given field of competences
I ➢ Selection field of action → Pragmatic, strategic, normative considerations
C ➢ Existing procedures of participation: to copy
O   them or not → Pragmatic, strategic, normative considerations
L ➢ External model of participation (e.g. Porto
A   Alegre): to copy it or not → Pragmatic, strategic, normative considerations
G ➢ Political opposition or support → Pragmatic and strategic considerations
E ➢ Administrative opposition or support → Pragmatic and strategic considerations

     ➢ 'Transfer' of guiding principles to this
     particular field of action → Normative considerations

S P E C I F I C A T I O N

| **Procedure of participatory budgeting** |
| (will develop further in reaction to problems/advantages in concrete functioning, changing goals/competences/political constellations…) |

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[18] "*On a inventé en marchand*", interview with Marc Fischer, 7.2.2008.
[19] This figure does not establish causal relationships between different sets of 'variables', but specifies the intervening factors and connections amongst them. This scheme is 'informed' by the empirical observation of the present case. As analytical scheme, however, which contains the intervening factors and the relation between them in ideal-type manner, it is potentially also applicable to other empirical cases.

In this figure, the frame is situated on top (the 'original idea') and the participatory budgeting process on the bottom (the 'result'). Few actors are involved in the process or instrument design. The procedural designing or creation is a process of procedural, political and ideational 'bricolage', i.e. creative construction of a participatory budgeting process. The designers adapt their normative principles (for instance to organise an inclusive process; to provide citizens with decision-making competences) to the selected field of action and design the new participatory process with regard to existing political and institutional constraints and influences. The respective role and importance of these factors is influenced by pragmatic, strategic and normative considerations of the process designers.[20]

For instance, the choice of high schools represented a political and pragmatic choice: political because high schools are the most important domain of regional competence,[21] get the biggest part of the overall regional finances (110 million euro out of a total budget of 494 million euros) and thereby allow for the underlining of the political ambition of the project. Moreover, the domain of high schools had the advantage of touching only one big administrative department (with two services), which facilitated the preparation and organisation of the process. The transfer of decision powers to participants (decision of concrete projects), as well as the involvement of the whole educative community including the technical personnel (cooks, cleaning personnel, etc.) reflected the two core ideas of the participatory democracy frame of Bouchet-Petersen, power division and inclusion (both aspects are also shared by Fischer).

Throughout this dynamic process, which roughly took one year (the school year 2004-2005), Bouchet-Petersen and Fischer developed the basic procedural shape of the 'High school participatory budget'.[22] Two meetings of around two hours form the core of the process: the

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[20] The main direction in this model is from the top to the bottom and expresses the process of creative 'idea-implementation' in the phase of process design. The arrow that goes from the bottom to the top introduces a temporal dimension and points to the possibility that the procedural dynamic can also have an influence on the frame definition, i.e. a modification over time. Once established, the participatory budgeting process will develop further as a result of the process functioning (level of participation, problems that occur, unexpected results, etc.) and/or changing policy goals, political constellations and/or competences.

[21] With the decentralisation law of 2004 (*Loi 2004-809, 13 août 2004 relative aux libertés et responsabilités locales*), regions inherited the competences for managing the real estate heritage and technical personnel of high schools.

[22] In the first year, the 'trial episode', 52 of 93 institutions were involved. From the second year on, the process was organised in all high schools. The modifications integrated over the following years concern above all the internal preparation in the schools and the cooperation between participants and regional officers, but did not alter the overall form. An official presentation of the process can be found on the website of the region: http://www.democratie-participative.fr/bpl/doc/reglement-bpl.pdf.

first one where participants make project proposals (November to December), the second one in order to vote about them (December to February). The regional administration invites all members of the school community to attend the meetings: pupils, their parents, teachers, technical personnel and the school director. During the events, representatives of the Regional executive and administrative service are also present, as well as the discussion moderator.

The overall sum of 10 million euros that the regional Executive concedes to the process is not allocated in advance to the high schools, but every school determines its own priorities in a voting process. Participants can propose and vote upon projects and proposals of up to 150,000 euros (the process does not include heavy investments such as the construction or complete renovation of buildings). The regional Executive will sum up all first priorities, and continue alike with the second, third, etc. priorities, until the sum of 10 million euros is reached. Between 2005 and 2008, the first three priorities of all high schools could be financed through this proceeding and a certain extension of the 'top-sum'.

The first meeting starts with a presentation of the functioning of the procedure in a general assembly; it usually takes place in the school theatre, the gymnasium or the canteen. Sometimes the regional politician who is present also gives a short introduction about the 'political sense' of the process, and presents for example the idea of participatory democracy. Thereafter, participants establish small and mixed working groups (bringing together participants from all categories) in order to propose and discuss projects that improve the living and learning conditions in the school. Usually, the organisers try to find two student volunteers per group, who are responsible for animating the debate and writing down the projects that are proposed. In addition, the facilitator is supposed to come into every group in order to assure positive debate and to recall the three questions supposed to guide the discussions: WHY is the project important? Why should it be done NOW? WHO benefits from the project? After around 30 to 40 minutes, the working groups present the summary of their ideas again to the general assembly.

In the following weeks, the technical services examine the proposals, evaluate whether they fall into the Regional domain of competence, and if so, estimate the costs involved. If it is deemed necessary to clarify something, it has become the norm to hold an additional meeting with the Regional Engineer and a group of volunteers from the school. In the second meeting, a member of the regional administrative service presents the document that contains all

considered projects and their costs.[23] Following a debate, which again should be based upon the three questions just mentioned, all participants vote to determine a hierarchy of preference. Therefore, everyone casts ten voting bulletins, which he or she can distribute freely amongst the projects. The scheme that receives the highest number of votes constitutes the first priority, and so forth. After the voting process, voluntaries count the votes per project and the moderator immediately announces the results to the participants. Participants systematically fill in an evaluation form after every meeting; moreover, a researcher evaluates particular aspects of the meetings every year.[24] All documents related to the process are available on-line on the participatory budget site, and students are informed of the results of the Regional Council debate by notices that are pinned up on all the school notice boards and through the internet.

Originally, Bouchet-Petersen and Fischer planned to set up a 2-level process, which would have allowed combining discussions within single high schools with those in other institutions and thereby introducing an element of redistributive justice. With regard to the strong political and administrative opposition to this even more far-reaching project,[25] the organisers preferred to stabilise the initial process instead of implementing immediately the more complex procedure. This process therefore reflects a compromise between the initial project and the perspectives of the representatives of the high school community.[26] At a later moment, the aim of creating a second level of participation succumbed to the changed political interests of the organisers because of national political developments, namely the 2008 Presidential election for which Royal ran as candidate (below). These limits notwithstanding, the PB procedure developed in the Poitou-Charentes region is distinct from the majoritiy of participatory and participatory budget institutions in France as it provides participants with real decision-making competences about considerable amounts of money. Surprisingly, however, the process seems to have had the greatest impact on the apparatus of the regional administration (and not in terms of a 'democratisation of democracy').

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[23] It is also explained why certain proposals have not been considered, for example because they are not part of the regional competences.

[24] The whole audit is, however, not published, but only a synthesis as the organisers fear that critical comments could be used by 'oppositional forces' to discredit the whole process. I evaluated the procedure in 2006-07.

[25] In the beginning, many officers were overtly against or at least very sceptical towards the process; there have been many examples where members of the direction, or teachers, tried to counter the 'High school participatory budget'. For example, they did not publicise the event within their institution, or tried to influence the discussions in favour of their personally preferred project. Moreover, the national rectorship forbid to schools to communicate the lists of students' names' or parents' details to the regional executive (for sending the invitations), and also forbid to organise the meetings during school hours.

[26] This compromise could be characterised as "référentiel négocié dominant" (Zittoun 2008), see chapter 1.

II. Unexpected result: a broad process of administrative reform and the emergence of a new *référentiel*

Whereas the initial emphasis of the process organisers was clearly and predominantly of a political nature, the 'High school participatory budget' led to a highly unexpected result: a broad process of administrative reform. The set of the High school participatory budget has hit the regional administration like a bomb. All of a sudden, regional technicians and officers had to explain and justify their choices in front of a critical public during the participatory meetings; costs of projects were debated publicly, and all members of the educational community could address their claims to the responsible officers in the regional administration directly, instead of relying on the school internal management. Through the open format discussion, the regional staff dealing with the process discovered a considerable amount of malfunctioning and deficiencies in the service provision within schools (especially as regard to poorly equipped boarder schools, deficient nutrition in canteens, and lacks in culture), as well as great differences amongst the 93 institutions in the region. They could see, for example, that some schools had received important amounts of money for the internal equipping and the renovation of buildings, whereas others were lacking the most basic materials.

In terms of administrative modernisation, the results of the participation process have been manifold. It has led to a direct and increased communication between service users and the regional administration. In 2008, the region has even created a specific employment position, the 'regional delegates of education', who are supposed to function as a link person between all service users and the region.[27] Second, the participatory procedure has provoked better control of public spending. It rendered transparent the cost calculations of the regional technical services (and of their private contractors), so that potential sources for over-calculations and the waste of money could be discovered and abolished. As the estimated costs of the projects are public, the participatory budget encourages the actors furthermore to identify the cheapest solutions, as well as those who really correspond to their needs; more and more institutions also opt for the self execution of projects, for example internal renovation works. Third, the administrative department dealing with the participation process

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[27] Their particular responsibility consists of controlling the implementation of voted projects, as well as of finding fast solutions towards small technical problems within highschools.

has provided additional services supposed to satisfy the deficiencies discovered during the meetings, namely poor living conditions in boarder schools,[28] problems regarding nutrition (in France pupils have lunch at school), insufficient cultural activities, and deficient sanitary facilities in high schools. Through hundreds of projects in these areas (more than 700 projects were realised in the first three years), as well as through the plenary discussions that take place during the meetings, the persons in charge of the process could perceive problems that had never been taken into account before. In order to ameliorate the situation, they developed concrete answers, e.g. the programme 'culture plus' (funds for cultural activities), the employment of 'cultural moderators' [*animateurs culturels*] who are supposed to support students with cultural activities, and a programme for better nutrition (increased use of regional and organic products, etc.).

Finally, a kind of 'participatory culture' seems to have developed inside the regional administration. After strong initial protests because of an extra workload (20% ca.) for providing the cost estimates, more and more regional employees get used to or are even convinced of the participatory approach. Moreover, there has been a renewal of the personnel working for the region. Many new officers have been hired who work in the framework of the 'participatory style' since the beginning of their contract; amongst them are also many politicised officers who support the participatory approach for political reasons (Mazeaud 2009: 5). In addition, the time investment for dealing with the participatory process could be reduced as the regional staff were able to use the experiences from past years to perform a better and faster evaluation of the proposals put forward at the PB meetings.[29] In order to enhance the overall management, the entire regional administration responsible for schools has been reorganised in spring 2008 in order to have one overall directory (with Fischer as director). These developments (the creation of new policy instruments; dialogue between regional administration and users; more transparency, etc.), as well as the implementation of new participatory instruments (citizen juries) and the indirect consideration of citizens' perspective with regard to the regional policy as a whole (below), witness the emergence of a new *référentiel* in the regional administration. Participatory democracy as frame of citizen participation has therefore developed into the new *référentiel* in the Poitou-Charentes high school administration. It is based on new professional identities, which consider the direct

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[28] Poitou-Charentes is a very rural region and many pupils live far from high schools. This is why a lot of boarder schools exist.
[29] This is to a large extent linked to the fact that similar kinds of projects are formulated every year, which allows the regional technicians to use previous cost- and project calculations.

contact to service users a normal part of the work and not as an unreasonable demand for 'professional experts' that alone dispose of the necessary technical know-how; and it involves the development of new policy instruments supposed to ameliorate the efficiency, transparency and user-orientation of public services.

This process of the transformation of the 'style' and normative reference of policy making, however, is still underway. Not all regional employees are convinced of the participatory processes and contest them more or less openly. A regional officer, for instance, expressed her concern with the new participatory agenda during an internal evaluation workshop dealing with the results of the participatory policy in the Poitou-Charentes region (March 2009):

> "This meeting appears to me like a guerrilla meeting of a group of initiated actors. We who have to practice this approach on the ground are considered as being stupid, as those who do not understand anything. The High school participatory budget is a political approach. This is a problem for me as civil servant."

It would be necessary to investigate empirically the exact degree of support within the regional administration. What is clear, however, is that a project that initially was supported by a very limited group of people, who struggled to implement it within the administration and who are still struggling, has transformed the style of policymaking in the domain of education. This approach could diffuse to other areas in the administration if more administrative directors became convinced of the process. Moreover, it could spread within the regional territory if more regional politicians became supporters of it (like in the region of Toskany, where the law about participatory democracy is strongly diffused via committed politicians). The present situation is characterised by the paradox of far-reaching results of the PB process and a relatively small *équipe* that has initiated and implemented it and strongly supports it.[30] The further development of the participatory agenda will depend in how far the initiators of the PB process can impose their perspectives in other areas and thereby develop an "ideologic hegemony" (Braun 1999: 20).

Whereas this section dealt with the *un*expected results of the 'High school participatory budget', the analysis of the expected outcomes is still missing. Did the PB procedure provoke a democratisation of high schools and lead to a broad involvement of working class members?

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[30] Contribution by Yves Sintomer during the internal evaluation seminar about the participatory policy in the Poitou-Charentes region (above).

III. Participatory democracy in practice?

As we have seen, the 'High school participatory budget' is supposed to represent a participatory process where citizens have a 'real stake' and that includes more people than the 'usual suspects', and particularly members of lower social strata. In the domain of high schools, this implies the need to break up the close power circles between the director and single elected board members,[31] who determine the priorities of spending without necessarily (and usually not) consulting the broad mass of students or the perspectives of the technical personnel. These groups have practically no power or influence in the 'traditional' system.

The political results of the 'High school participatory budget' are ambiguous. It is true that participants decide upon concrete projects for the high schools. The sums at stake can be considerable, reaching more than 250.000 euros per year and high school (Mazeaud 2009). Furthermore, the influence of participants goes beyond the projects voted and implemented in the framework of the PB meetings. When they fit to the regional priorities, the regional Assembly is also implementing those schemes that did not receive funding within the PB process. This is the reason why participants have an indirect influence on the overall regional education policy. Through this proceeding, the regional assembly has used the procedure in order to introduce a stronger social agenda in the regional policy (favouring disadvantaged high schools), which is not integral part of participatory process because of the lacking intra-school level.

This influence is, however, counter-balanced by the limited impact of participants on the process design, already mentioned above. Moreover, the participatory budgeting process has so far not provoked a mass bottom-up involvement,[32] although participation rates have been increasing over the last years. In 2007-2008, 16,400 people took part in meetings, which is a 60% increase over a two-year period. Seven to eight percent of the 120,000 people invited to

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[31] Every school has several boards with elected members (pupil representation, parents' representation, etc.), the most important one being the administrative council (*Conseil d'administration*). It involves representatives of the territorial collectivity (3 or 4), of the high school's administrative staff and other qualified persons; pupils' and parents' representatives; and high school staff (each group represents approximately a third of the total number). The council validates the budget, which the director elaborates and presents.

[32] In spring 2006, there was a very broad bottom-up movement of students in Poitou-Charentes and in many other regions against a reform proposal of the national government. The "First Job Contract", a draft law of the right-wing government led by Dominique de Villepin, aimed at modifying contracts for young people in their first job by providing fewer contractual guarantees. Because of the huge wave of student protests, the law was not implemented.

attend are present at each cycle of the meetings. These numbers locate the procedure clearly in the upper bracket of attendance of participatory institutions, in France and in Europe. With regard to the important logistics and human resources deployed by the region[33] and the way in which students are encouraged, in some cases almost obliged, to attend, the results appear a bit less promising. The obligation to participate, practiced in certain, not all high schools, does certainly account for the increase of pupils' participation over the last years.

Figure 5: Development of participation in the 'High school participatory budget'
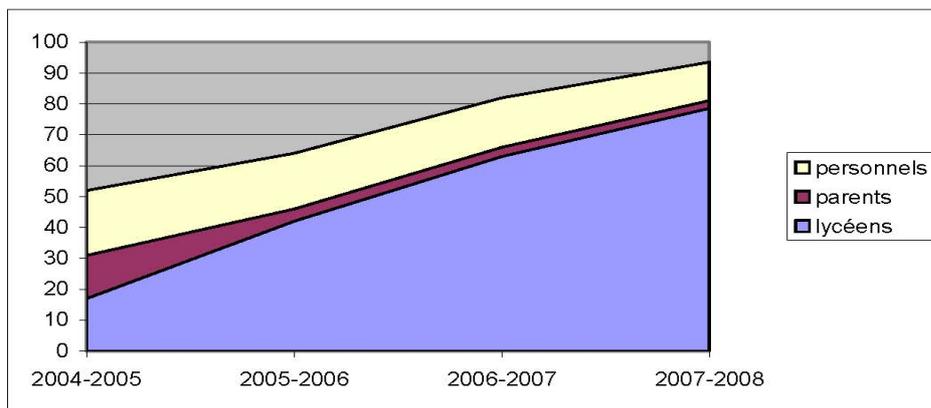
Source: Mazeaud 2009: 8; 'lycéens' means pupils and 'personnels' technical staff[34]

Generally speaking, the degree to which the 'High school participatory budget' modifies, or not, the power hierarchies within the 93 institutions of secondary education (going beyond the two meetings) depends largely on the acceptance or rejection of the procedure by the school directors and their ruling team. They find themselves in the "tension between the need for resources offered by the BPL [*budget participatif des lycées*] and the obligation to organise their own deprivation of power" (Mazead 2009: 19). They use different strategies in order to cope with this complicated situation. The number of those who overtly try to boycott the procedure has declined over the years, because they understood the importance of the procedure in terms of acquiring funds for their institutions.[35] Others therefore tolerate the process and try to get out of it the highest possible merit for themselves, namely the funding of expensive projects (that maybe were refuted by the region in the framework of the

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[33] I do not know whether the regional department dealing with the 'High school PB' has calculated the exact cost of the process (personnel included); in any case these numbers are not public, probably because the organisers fear that the political opponents could find an additional argument to criticise the process.

[34] The participation rates of teachers went down in the period of 2004-2008.

[35] This varies considerably from institution to institution: it can represent 5 or 50% of the investment resources (Mazeaud 2009: 18). With regard to the period 2005-2008, the relation between high schools who received the smallest amount (35.199 euro) and those with the most expensive projects (254.071 euros) is one to nine (whereas it is one to 48 as regard to the 'classic' funding system) (ibid: 14).

traditional system of fund allocation). For this strategic approach to function, however, the director and his/her close collaborators need a minimum degree of acceptance and legitimacy in the school, as well as the capacity to present 'their' project in terms of a project that benefits everybody. They need to convince the large mass of students (if they participate), because decisions are taken by simple majority role and the principle of 'one man one vote'. When the assembly votes for several small projects for pupils (e.g. USB keys for students, one cultural activity, etc.) instead of one or several bigger ones (e.g. refurbishment of a teaching room) favoured by the direction, this constitutes a defeat for the latter and reveals a lack of trust and communication within the institution (ibid: 21).

A third group of directors support the process, convinced by the political sense of the project and the benefits for themselves and the entire educative community. This is more likely to happen in an institution where the relationship between the different members of the high school community is overall positive. The kind of internal quality of the communication also has an impact on the quality of discussions that take place in the framework of the PB process. I participated to several meetings, where pupils were discussing with teachers and technical staff on an equal and cooperative level (which does not mean that discussions can also be confrontational) and all together were trying to resolve common problems and to argue about the projects with the highest needs.[36] I was regularly told that the overall 'discussion culture' in these institutions was good and therefore also the discussions of the participatory budget process. In other places, where ordinary students and the technical staff were not at all familiar with the possibility to voice their own position, discussions were dominated by professors and the leading personnel, as students and technical personnel would not dare to speak during the participatory meetings.

Scholars of feminist research and of deliberative democracy have analysed these "hidden" power relations in terms of "subtle forms of control" (Mansbridge 1990: 127) or of "informal impediments to participatory parity that can persist even after everyone is formally and legally licensed to participate" (Frazer 1997: 78). The remaining power hierarchy also appears sometimes more explicitly, for example when a professor or a parent simply 'confiscate' the role of the discussion facilitator in the small-group discussions of the first round of meetings. In general, the adults – with the exception of the technical personnel – speak more and with a

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[36] The analysis presented in this chapter is based on the participatory observation of twenty meetings during the period of October 2006 to February 2007.

more sophisticated language than students.[37] The presence of external facilitators minimises this power des-equilibrium to a certain degree, but there exist great differences as to their moderation capacities. Moreover, the presence of moderators cannot change the structural inequality between pupils and professors (who evaluate them), or between the technical agent and his 'boss', the director. In the words of Archon Fung and Erik Olin Wright this means that a "countervailing power", consisting of "a variety of mechanisms that reduce, and perhaps even neutralize, the power-advantages of ordinarily powerful actors" (Fung, Wright 2003b: 260), exists only to a limited degree within the discussion processes of the 'High school participatory budget'.

Overall, however, the transfer of considerable, direct and indirect decision-making competences to citizens and the organisation of a process involving all members of the educative community (including those who have no voice in the traditional system) witness a far-reaching process in political terms. It constitutes an exception in the French context characterised by a dominance of consultative, micro-local processes of PB.[38] At the same time, the lack of a second level of participation, bringing together members of different high schools, restricts the discussions to enquiries about the needs within single institution; it thereby constitutes an important difference with regard to the model of 'Porto Alegre adapted for Europe', which is why the 'High school participatory budget' is situated in between the latter and the 'proximity participation' model.

Bouchet-Petersen and Fischer justify the lack of a second participation level with the situation of 'double power' in the management of high schools (regions dealing with buildings and personnel, the state with pedagogical matters), the principle of autonomy of high schools (they decide whether to implement such a process) and the opposition from the national *Réctorat*. Yet, it is not understandable why these factors come only into play with regard to the introduction of the second participation level and did not prevent the very introduction of the participatory budget process. It seems therefore more appropriate to understand it as the result of changing political priorities of Royal and her small team. The introduction of the

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[37] There exist considerable differences between the type of high school, and the type of pupil. Elected representatives of the pupils, even though they have exactly the same position in the BPL, participate more often than 'rank-and-file' pupils. In 'general' high schools, pupils dare more often to discuss than in an EREA, which means institutions with pupils that have learning difficulties. The best discussions I have seen took place in an agricultural high school, where apparently a better communication between professors and pupils exist more generally.
[38] See chapter 5.

participatory budget process was forced through against strong opposition when it was integral part of a new political programme, which needed to be constructed after the successful elections of 2004. When Royal became the official candidate of the Socialist party for the 2008 Presidential elections, the political attention in Poitou-Charentes was absorbed by this major event, even more so as Bouchet-Petersen was directly involved in the electoral campaign. This is the reason why there was no time to consider new procedural rules for the participatory budget project (after it had become quite institutionalised) and to pursue the initial idea of implementing a second level of participation. Moreover, in the contentious situation of a national election it probably appeared too risky to launch this new participatory experience, which could have provoked important levels of protest and therefore have negative impacts on Royal's image as a candidate.

Maybe the greatest challenge consists in maintaining, or developing, the 'political sense' that the initiators are pursuing: to give citizens the sensation that they can have an impact on decisions and thereby become interested in political processes. This difficulty reflects a structural problem of 'top-down' participatory instruments, namely the difficult creation of interest for a process of participation. Is the 'High school participatory budget' becoming nothing more than an additional channel for acquiring funds? Does it affect the participants in the sense of a 'school of democracy'? No studies so far have systematically analysed the impact of the PB process on the participants, but it seems overall rather limited.[39] Moreover, pupils remain only three years in the high schools, which is why their participation in the process is necessarily limited in time. These difficulties could perhaps be overcome when the organisers allowed a greater co-management through the participants and emphasised more clearly the idea of community development[40]?

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[39] This perspective was presented by some members of the regional administration during the internal evaluation seminar about the participatory instruments in the region (above).

[40] Two developments already point in the direction of this idea. First, there has been a growing emphasis over the last years on the self-realisation of schemes by members of high schools, instead of recurring to external providers. Initially, economic reasons explain this choice (to save money). At the same time, many involved actors also underline the benefits of such an approach in terms of creating a common project that brings together different members of the educative community and creates more interaction, social bonds and sustainability. Second, the regional executive has employed 'cultural moderators' in the high schools, who have the duty to support students for preparing schemes. They also have a broader obligation, that of working with or accompanying students throughout the year in order to help them to set up cultural projects or to organise excursions. Broadly speaking, the aim here is to engage learning processes in the respective community (here: students) so that they develop their competences and become 'capable' of organising themselves or to set up projects.

Conclusion

The 'High school participatory budget' is the result of a deliberative attempt to 'put into practice' an innovative frame of citizen participation, participatory democracy. The participatory democracy frame of Bouchet-Petersen, characterised by an emphasis on the transfer of power to citizens and the participation of disadvantaged groups of the population (with a limited social agenda), guided the implementation of this participatory process, which was set up with the deliberate aim to break with the existing practices of citizen involvement in France. This case therefore demonstrates the role a frame of citizen participation can have with regard to the set up of a new institution. The frame alone does not explain the procedural shape of the 'High school participatory budget' – but without knowledge of this frame it would be difficult to understand it.

The previous developments have also shown that a frame is never implemented 'one-to-one', but always adapted to the context in relation to institutional and political constraints, as well as to the pragmatic, normative and political strategies of the process designers. In a dynamic process of 'bricolage', they have invented the participation instrument during the period of its implementation. Once implemented, the instrument has shown a strong internal logic of development. Namely, it has led a considerable process of administrative reform, which eventually has provoked a change of the *référentiel* of the regional education policy. Put differently: a frame of citizen participation that initially was introduced by a very small group of people could be transformed to a more general reference point amongst administrative officers and could thereby change the organisational logic and normative orientation in one administrative department.

At the same time, the political results, i.e. the main expected outcome in the beginning and still today, have been far more ambivalent. The process is innovative with regard to the transfer of decision-making competences and the scope of influence (direct decision on important sums of money; indirect influence on regional education policy), but not as to the level of the process (micro-local), the use of specific mechanisms of involvement (limited) and the impact of participants on the rules and the management of the procedure (limited). The following table summarises these aspects, which I introduced in chapter 2.

Table 8: Degree of political/procedural innovation of the 'High school PB'

	Impact on rules and management	Decision-making	Level of participation	Measures for increasing participation	Scope of influence
'High school PB'	Limited	Yes	Micro-level (single high schools)	Limited	Considerable: high school, regional policy

How has participatory budgeting been adopted in the city of Salford, the case to which I turn now? What factors influenced the process implementation and what kind of results has I shown so far? Does it represent an innovative participatory process?

Chapter 9

From Porto Alegre to local community involvement: Participatory budgeting in Salford

Compared to the situation in the Poitou-Charentes region analysed in the last chapter, the development of a participatory budgeting process in Salford followed an opposite path of development. There was no official frame of citizen participation, and the idea of implementing a participatory budgeting process was brought on the political agenda via a mediated (not direct) diffusion process. Inspired by the Porto Alegre process, a local non-governmental organisation (Community Pride Initiative[1]) approached the council and proposed to transform the existing framework of citizen participation in light of this innovative experience.

In Salford, the situation remained blocked for many years, because no compromise was found between two positions: on the one hand, the aim to set up a Porto Alegre-like structure, represented by the members of Community Pride Initiative; on the other hand, the reluctance from the part of local council members and officers to modify profoundly the existing structures of local community involvement. The situation only changed after the idea of PB had started to spread through the country and provided the local actors with a new procedural format and new ideas about this process: participatory budgeting in terms of local grant spending, practiced for instance in the cities of Bradford and Newcastle.

The procedure that eventually was implemented in one city area of Salford (Claremont / Weaste & Seedley[2]) does not belong to the most innovative examples of participatory

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[1] Community Pride Initiative has become the Participatory Budgeting Unit and is today the official partner of the national government to carry out the 'national strategy' for the implementation of PB (chapter 6).

[2] The area of Claremont / Weaste & Seedley started this initiative in 2007 and repeated it in 2008 (not in 2009). In 2008, another city area (East Salford) initiated a PB process, but I consider this process only at the margins in this chapter.

budgeting in Great Britain, although it is a quite 'typical' case in procedural terms (the spending of a specific 'pot' of money by residents of a particular local area). The aim of the organising team in Salford was deliberately *not* to implement a Porto Alegre-style model of participation (no politician supported this initiative), but to remain within the existing institutional setting of the neighbourhood management structure and 'community committees'. There was no political or administrative support for the implementation of a process, which goes beyond the existing institutional framework of citizen involvement. The process takes place within a limited geographical area and does not involve the overall political agenda of the city or its administrative functioning and *référentiel*. Consequently, the Claremont / Weaste & Seedley process is a case of procedural assimilation of the Porto Alegre model to a new host culture (in the sense of largely adapting it to the existing institutional context), because the 'idea broker' who imported this new reference could not convince local policy makers to introduce a more innovative procedure.

In order to lay out this argumentation, I will first present the local context. I focus the presentation on the city of Salford rather than on the area of Claremont and Weaste & Seedley, because it is at the citywide level that the preparatory discussions for organising a PB process took place. This section also presents the position of some key Salford politicians, who have been very favourable of community participation, but restrict it to the micro-local level. This position contrasts with the original proposals by Community Pride, introduced in the second part of this chapter, which aimed at a more complex participatory structure. The second section also lays out the way how, eventually, a way out of the blockade between the positions of Community Pride Initiative and the local council was found. The third part contains a presentation of the way, how the process functions (a combination of the procedural models 'proximity participation' and 'community development at local and city level'), as well as a critical analysis of it.

I. A post-industrial city with a city-wide structure of local community engagement

Salford is a north English, post-industrial city (216.000 inhabitants, 2005) that occupies that segment of the Greater Manchester conurbation lying in the west of Manchester city centre. It

covers 37 square miles and the five districts of Salford, Eccles, Worsley, Irlam & Cadishead, and Swinton & Pendlebury. It has high levels of social deprivation, the most deprived areas of the city being close to Manchester city centre in the east;[3] they receive additional funding from national programmes for urban regeneration, the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and the New Deal for Communities. The engagement of local communities goes back to the 1980s. It is part of the overall strategy of the city executive to fight urban poverty and to create more understanding and support in the population for the political choices of the council. Hazel Blears, former Minister in the Brown cabinet and initiator of the "national strategy" for the introduction of participatory budgeting PB in all English local authorities (CLG 2008), is from Salford and MP for Salford.

Outside the UK, Salford is less known than her neighbouring city, Manchester. Salford, created in 1974 through the junction of independent towns, has difficulties to get away from the overwhelming shadow of Manchester, an internationally known city that has been successful in attracting business firms and of organising high-profile events like the Commonwealth Games in 2004. By contrast, Salford has put more energy in establishing a city-wide structure for the participation of local communities and is nationally recognised as being one of several 'Empowering authorities'.[4]

> "Salford (...) doesn't have the profile of Manchester. It has difficulties to bring in investment, has many of the same problems. So it has done a strategy, which is more based around its residents (...). It's got an idea that its residents are its greatest resource. 'Let us built the communities from inside'. So it has put more energy into that side, whereas Manchester is more managerial and top-down."[5]

In the last 30 years, Salford has lost a third of its traditional employment base (Audit Commission 2004: 7).[6] Despite these problems, the presence of a University and the geographical closeness to Manchester and to Liverpool, constitute a strategic advantage for the city. It has led some heavy regeneration projects throughout the last years (especially in

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[3] According to the government's 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation, Salford occupies position 12 out of 354 authorities (where 1st is most deprived), which means that the city is within the 4% most deprived districts in the whole country (in 2000 Salford occupied position 21).

[4] The network of empowering communities consists of two local authorities in each of the nine English regions; they are considered by the national government to have good practice in 'empowering' local citizens.

[5] Interview with Jez Hall, Member of the PB Unit, 28.6.2004.

[6] Especially since the beginning of the 1990s, the employment structure has changed. There has been a 59% fall in traditional manufacturing and manual type industries, compared to an almost 40% increase in the number of service related jobs. Concretely, one finds manufacturing (9,7%), construction (5,5%), Distraction/Hotels/Catering (20,5%), banking and finance sector (24%), general services (34,5%) and transport and communication industry (5,3%).

the area close to Manchester city centre) which are considered as a success by the city council – although critical voices deplore the very top-down management of these projects and the processes of gentrification they engender. The percentage of ethnic minorities is relatively low compared to the national level (four against nine percent, 2006), although some areas show a higher concentration.

Salford has a traditionally Labour-dominated council. Despite Labour lost electoral support during the last years, its leading position has not been seriously challenged (at least until the crisis of the Brown government in 2009). In the current council (elections take place during May of every year), Labour provides 36 councillors, the Conservative 13 and the Liberal Party 10. The turnout has been fluctuating during the previous years, but is generally quite low (just above 30% at the last elections)[7]. Three councillors represent each of the 20 wards of the city.

During the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, a group of young Labour councillors, amongst them Hazel Blears, pushed for the introduction of a more 'localist' style of policy-making. They criticized the very hierarchical, authoritarian and centralised ('old-Labour') style of government of the then council and demanded a more direct involvement of local people in their living areas and with regard to overall council affairs.[8] As a result, a citywide system of neighbourhood management was established in 1994; the 20 electoral wards were grouped into eight neighbourhood areas, each of which has a 'community committee'. The neighbourhood structures are part of a larger partnership structure, the Local Strategic Partnership called *In Salford*. Therefore, all eight neighbourhood managers work with the main local 'partners': Greater Manchester Police, Salford Primary Care Trust, the youth service, various Salford City Council departments and community and voluntary groups.

Community committees are quite formal structures, made up of residents and local councillors and supported by a Neighbourhood Management Team.[9] Typically, around 30 to 40 people, of whom the great majority are active members of a local group or association, come to a regular community committee meeting. Whereas members of the public are invited

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[7] The results of the last years are: 2008 – 31,3%; 2007 – 29,49%; 2006 – 28,14%; 2004 – 35,53%; 2003 – 40,7%; 2002 – 25,07%; 2001 – 42,77%; 2000 – 21,04%.
[8] Interview with Derek Antrobus, Councillor in Salford, Lead member for Planning, 21.11.2008.
[9] This team is often composed by the manager himself (and maybe one or several assistant managers), who is a civil servant working for the city council; by one or several community development workers and by one or more administration officers.

to attend the public meetings (roughly once every two months), they have no voting rights and can only participate in the debate with the chairperson's consent. Actors with a 'full' legitimacy within the committee meetings are only representatives of registered community groups and councillors.

Community committees are not only supposed to bring decision-making processes closer to local residents, but also to 'feed' local priorities into the council. This is either done by the 'political executive' of ward councillors and the 'executive group' of council officers, ward councillors, representatives of service providers and members of the committee. The more indirect approach consists of the 'community action plan', a yearly plan of local priorities elaborated by the neighbourhood management team.[10] In order to give residents and community committees more direct possibilities of influence, they receive since 1999 a 'devolved budget' from Salford City Council.[11] Initially, the council assigned one pound per resident to each committee (220.000 pounds). In 2004 the council increased the amount up to 500.000 pounds as a measure to strengthen the action of community committees and to enable them to adopt a more holistic approach (although the funding remains still limited, in medium 62.500 pounds per area or committee or of 3,1 pound per person). For projects to get funding, they have to respect the "parameters set by the council" (Constitution of Salford, part 2) and match the priorities of the community action plan.

Decisions about how to spend the budget are made by a small 'budget sub-group'. It is made up of several councillors and several members of the committee (local councillors have the right to veto the decisions in the budget sub group, although this seems to have never happened so far).[12] Members of the budget sub group present their proposal at a regular community committee meeting. The committee usually approves it, sometimes also without any further discussion. Yet, in case of persisting doubts and questions, the committee has the possibility to invite the applicants for further discussion or to pay only parts of the requested

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[10] The priorities established in the plan are sent to the council and delivering agencies and will then, in theory, influence the delivery of local services (see CPI 2005 for a critical analysis).

[11] In addition, community committees receive several other funds (of several thousand pounds each), some of which come from central government through Salford City council or via the Primary Care Trust (National Health Service) or the Police; others come directly from Salford City council. In Claremont / Weaste & Seedley, the community committee had £63,151 for the year 2008-09.

[12] With regard to the influence of 'normal' Community Committee members (that is members of a recognised community group) on the decisions, there exist important differences between the areas. Whereas in some areas the decision is really taken both by residents and councillors, in other places it is the politicians who make it (Neighbourhood Manager, interview, 9.12.2004). The neighbourhood manager, and maybe a community development worker, assists the meeting to coordinate and support it, but without voting right.

money. The devolved budget is partly used to facilitate the realization of immediate small-scale projects like for example a community gathering. Nevertheless, its main function is to provide the priorities of the community action plan on a more stable basis, for example through a contract with an agency or organisation.[13]

Whereas the devolved budget concerns the neighbourhood level and represents a specific fund, there also exists a consultation process called 'Your money, your choice' about the municipal budget, initiated in 1996. The then Deputy Chairman of the Finance Committee (who had already been amongst the group of councillors who sustained a more 'localist' approach in the late 1980s and beginning of 1990s) initiated this process in order to increase the transparency of municipal finance allocation:

> "When I came to the council in 1979, the budget was decided by a meeting of the Finance committee. These were secret meetings, even members of the Labour party didn't know anything until the day of the council meeting when we had to approve the budget proposal. It was a centrally organised, closed decision process which involved a very small group of people".[14]

In addition, he wanted to increase the quality of decision-making by integrating peoples' views before making a decision; a further aim was to make people aware of the heavy spending constraints the council is facing.[15] As shown in chapter 6, central government in the UK exerts a strong control over municipal finances, for example through the "ring-fencing" of central government funds for particular issues.

The budget consultation follows a quite traditional meeting style.[16] Because of low participation rates, around 20 people per meeting, a more standardised and less interactive processes of consultation has been introduced in 2006 in addition to one remaining meeting of the budget consultation (a citizen panel). The panel consists of a large group of randomly selected citizens (more than 1000) who are regularly surveyed about budgetary issues;

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[13] In Claremont / Weaste & Seedley, for example, nearly two thirds of the devolved budget is spent on such a contract-basis, particularly with youth organisations as youth work has been established as a local priority. Contracts are normally established on a yearly basis.

[14] Interview with Derek Antrobus, Councillor, Lead member for Planning, 21.11.2008.

[15] Interview with Derek Antrobus; see also Salford City Council 2000.

[16] During a meeting of around two hours, an officer of the finance department presents the budget via power point presentation. Thereafter, he engages in a discussion with the participants (all residents of Salford are invited). A support officer writes down the participants' questions, suggestions and/or complaints; the final accountability document contains the answers of the council towards each of the items. The answers are quite vague and there is no information in how far concretely such suggestion has been integrated into the official budget proposal. In addition, participants have no influence about the format of the meeting.

moreover, the city administration sends questionnaires for particular groups of the population in order to seek their priorities.

All in all, the 'participatory politics' of Salford City Council have been characterised over the last years by a commitment to involve citizens, users and local communities in the making of public policies: "We voluntarily engage in consultation because we think it is right, it is useful and it helps us to make better decisions" (Salford City Council 2000). The city council enumerates a "customer focus" as part of its overall values (Salford City Council 2008: 41), but also underlines the need for more "community cohesion", "community engagement and empowerment" (ibid: 28) as part of the overall goal to promote inclusion in the city.[17] The process of participatory budgeting is since 2008 mentioned in this framework, together with the neighbourhood management approach and other 'community-related' activities (ibid).

As the presentation so far has shown, the overall approach to citizen participation is not based on a very far-reaching or 'radical' perspective in Salford. In the great majority of existing participatory devices, the scope of action for citizens is clearly delimitated. Citizens have for example a consultative voice about the municipal finances, or they can co-determine the spending of small amounts of money in their neighbourhoods.[18] It is always, however, the council who sets the overall framework for the participation of residents. It seems that even the most supportive politicians of citizen engagement, like the Lead member for planning who introduced the budget consultation in 1996 (and who devolved the money that will be used for a PB process), underline the need for a strong role of the council with regard to the 'merely local' perspectives of residents:

> "There's a tension between local, particular concerns and a wider perspective. We have to look at priorities across the city. Because some communities might need more than others. People in one area might think that a particular road is really dangerous, that there will be an accident soon. But we might have a priority for that other road where already three accidents have happened. So there's a tension between community themselves and the questions related to the whole city. (...) There is always a role for the centre."[19]

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[17] The other policy goals ('pledges') of the city are: improving health; reducing crime; encouraging learning, leisure and creativity; investing in young people; creating prosperity; and enhancing life (Salford City Council 2008).
[18] In addition, many tools for the greater involvement of service users exist, such as feedback carts, complaint mechanisms, etc.
[19] Interview with Derek Antrobus, Councillor, Lead member for Planning, 21.11.2008.

The former leader of the council also makes clear that the engagement of residents does not change the overall decision-competences of elected representatives. In his perspective, the participation of citizens is good as it allows politicians to be more informed about what people want; but it does not modify the existing division of power between politicians and citizens:

> "[In the 1990s, we designed] what we called a (...) community strategy (...); that helps us to find out what the people of Salford [want], how they feel (...), what the key issues are that concern them (...). [With this strategy] we could understand quite clearly [local priorities] and have more a bottom-up approach than a top-down approach. Always, always making clear though that we are the elected members (...) At the end of the day we are the ones that are responsible. Because we are elected, we are the only ones that are accountable, democratically through the ballot box. And we will not abdicate that responsibility. We will exercise it, but hopefully with more understanding."[20]

This position comes close to the proximity frame of Raffarin presented in chapter 5. It aims at a greater dialogue between citizens and policy makers, but does by no means modify the decision-making competences of elected politicians. All in all, the traditional perspective on citizen participation in Salford can be described as a combination of a community frame à la Hazel Blears (seeing it as legitimate and useful to devolve small amounts of money to local groups of people) and the proximity frame Raffarin-style.

In the beginning of the new Millennium, members of Community Pride Initiative, inspired by the Porto Alegre model, tried to challenge this dominant perspective to citizen engagement in Salford with a more participatory approach to local citizen engagement.

II. The conflict between "Porto Alegre" and local community involvement

The 'story' of participatory budgeting in Salford witnesses the problems of a diffusion process via "accommodation" (an active transmitter tries to export the objects of diffusion by fitting it to the targeted social context; Snow, Benford 1999). In Salford, the 'transmitter' did for a long time not manage to convince local policy makers to implement the new ideas into

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[20] Interview with Bill Hinds, Former Leader of Salford city council, 7.12.2004.

the own context. The compromise position that emerged after several years is influenced by the spread of PB at the national level and a changing national policy context.

In 2000, three members of Community Pride Initiative went to Porto Alegre and Recife in Brazil in the framework of a 'Learning Exchange' programme between 'North' and 'South'. Once they came back to England, they re-interpreted, translated and adapted (cf. Roggeband 2004: 162) the Brazilian procedure to the local and national context. For example, they established links between participatory budgeting and the British government modernisation agenda, i.e. its emphasis on partnership working, community participation and the fight against poverty (CPI 2000).[21] Moreover, they used the Porto Alegre model as a matrix to propose modifications to the existing institutional framework of local citizen participation in Salford and Manchester. In Salford, particularly, they aimed to combine the existing forms of budget-related engagement (community committees, devolved budgets and the budget consultation process) into a more complex approach aiming to reinvigorate democracy and community participation, to create more user-oriented services and to tackle poverty and social exclusion (CPI 2003).[22]

For one of the three members who went to Brazil, Jez Hall, the advocacy work for participatory budgeting is rooted in a political background of bottom-up community activism. The next short bibliographic note adds to the panorama of 'PB actors' initiated in the previous chapter.

1) An activist from Manchester: empowering local communities

Jez Hall was born in 1962 in Lusaka, Zambia, as one of five brothers.[23] His father was a liberal journalist who established the first national newspaper for a black readership in Zambia – then the British colony of Northern Rhodesia. Jez Hall went to a private school in London and then studied economics and international politics at Manchester University, from

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[21] They did not refer very often to the idea of participatory democracy, mentioned only once in the 2000 document (CPI 2000).

[22] They made three concrete propositions. First, to take a small percentage of every directorate and thereby create an investment fund; second, to extend the existing system of devolved budgets and create a more direct link to mainstream funding; third, to use the Neighbourhood Renewal money as a basis for an investment fund (CPI 2003: 7-8).

[23] This presentation is based on two interviews with Jez Hall (28.6.2004; 18.9.2007) and many informal discussions. Direct citations are marked with "". It does not take into account the official statements or publications of the PB Unit he is working for.

which he graduated in 1984. In this period (Falkland war, massive miners' strikes, the Labour party 'destroyed') he was not politically active through national organisations, but lived a 'green-alternative' lifestyle (a woodworker, following vegan nutrition, involved in co-operatives etc) with his partner; she is an artist working in schools and community groups.

Everything changed with the birth of their first child (1994). When Hall was looking for self-managed child-care groups in Manchester, he got to know the local community centre and helped to establish a regular parent-toddler group. He became interested in the centre's work, became very active and quickly was elected as chairperson of the local community association, going on to represent local community groups in their engagement with the city council. In this framework, he got to know the NGO Community Pride Initiative. When members of CPI asked him in 2000 if he wanted to go to Porto Alegre as a community activist in order to learn more about the participatory budgeting process, he accepted. The encounter with Porto Alegre was important for him, as thereafter he became one of the first main supporters of this procedure in the UK. Back to Britain, he co-authored the early documents of CPI about the possibilities to introduce a similar process in Manchester and Salford. Still today, he is working on a part-time basis for the PB Unit and has developed a particular interest for participatory budgeting processes involving young children and teenagers. At the same time, he has other occupations concerned with developing the community (or third) sector.

Jez Hall represents a sort of 'bottom-up community-spirit' of PB in the UK. For him, participatory budgeting constitutes a form of local community development and empowerment with the aim of creating more "social capital":

> "I would say the aim [of participatory budgeting] is to create an active sort of social capital (...); [to build] community groups who are aware of their relationship to other groups and use the process of participatory budgeting to interact with each others and bring about changes, either through being able to have a political voice or just being able to solve their own problems through community-led enterprise and initiative in their local areas. For me personally the main aim is to build stronger communities (...) so individuals are more effective in their volunteering or in their community life; and achieve more through their involvement with others; and feel part of a sort of communal process in some sense."

Core ideas of this perspective, which represents the 'grassroots' counter-part to Hazel Blear's community frame, are the organisation of common activities amongst local people, and particularly of disadvantaged groups of the population. From this perspective, the joining of local groups and associations "raises the capacities of the community to become involved". It engages learning processes, enables ordinary citizens to understand their situation and broader political processes. Moreover, it may fight the isolation of people. When they participate to a local community or a process like PB, "they are no longer isolated, they've become empowered. (…); and that will be good (…) to tackle their poverty".

Beyond these core principles, Hall sees processes like participatory budgeting also as possible ways to "enhance democratic accountability and to strengthen the democratic process" as a whole. One important problem of the current political order would be the "institutional resistance" to change amongst policy-makers. A second problematic aspect is the fact that citizens "are very cynical" about the political order, and that there are "very low levels of engagement", especially in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. This is why participatory instruments, which like PB "create public spaces for dialogue" are important, because they potentially increase the dialogue between citizens and policy-makers and 'empower' local communities.

Hall's perspective is rooted in an anthropological conception of men being social beings that want to be part of a group, that are only happy in a group – with happiness being the overall aim of human life. For Hall, the direct work with local communities is crucial, "to be in the room" with people and to work together with them. He considers the work of the PB Unit like a form of "action research" whose members are not remote experts, but aim to accompany local people and to learn together with them. Whereas Hall is fascinated by the Porto Alegre model (annual cycle, a budget council with community representatives, etc.), the main goal for him is the creation of a common space for communities, which engage a common learning, discussion, and decision process. Hall's position is summarised in the following table.

Table 9: 'Community development/empowerment' frame of Hall

'Community development/empowerment' frame	
Developed by	Jez Hall
Ideological foundation	- Social capital, communitarianism, participatory democracy

Diagnosis	- Institutional resistence to change
	- Low levels of engagement, high degree of cynism about political system
	- Poor people have no voice in decision-making
Prognosis	- Create participatory instruments like participatory budgeting
	- Engage learning processes amongst citizens and policy-makers
Goals	- Empower local communities
	- Community development
	- Strengthen the democratic order
	- Tackle poverty
	- Provision of services in relation to local needs
Key features of participatory processes	- Provide space of common discussion and decision for citizens
	- Accountability of policy-makers
	(ideally: Porto Alegre-style model with an annual cycle, a budget council, etc.)

2) Some progress, but no 'breakthrough'

In Salford, Jez Hall and other members of Community Pride Initiative 'translated' their community-based perspectives into an active work with local communities, for example in the form of 'budget literacy' workshops with local residents (explaining in simple words the functioning of municipal budgets).[24] This happened in the framework of a contract between Community Pride and Salford city council; the latter contracted this NGO in order to carry out research about the existing forms of participation in Salford and to deliver practical support for the citywide budget consultation process.

Whereas some concrete advances could be made,[25] the development of a participatory budgeting process in Salford was very long. The members of Community Pride could reach no 'real breakthrough' in the work with the council and civil servants. As I showed in the last section, the latter were committed to local community engagement, but remained reluctant to more far-reaching forms of engagement or a more profound change of the existing structure

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[24] Later on, Hall did not follow any more the developments in Salford very closely, but focussed on other PB processes in the UK. Other members of CPI come, for instance, from a church background and pursue the aim to provide charity for poor communities.

[25] The engagement of CPI probably influenced the decision of the council to increase the devolved budget up to 500.000 pounds in 2004, and to organise more, and more area-based meetings of the city-wide 'budget consultation' process: instead of having only one meeting in the main Civic Centre in January, additional three meetings were organised within the whole city area in November 2003; during the period of December-January 2004/05, nine decentralised meetings took place, and several meetings during the same period of the following year (2005-06). As mentioned above, however, the limited participation in these meetings led to a renewed change of strategy in 2006 and the introduction of a citizen panel.

of local participation within the neighbourhood management structure. They did not support the idea of integrating a sort of Porto Alegre model in Salford. As a neighbourhood manager states:

> "The initial proposals of Community Pride were kind of to mimic Porto Alegre, at least it seemed like it. It was very ambitious. There were many papers, many complex models. Some of their assumptions, I didn't find them really convincing, although I only saw it with some distance. But I said: This isn't going to happen!"[26]

The Coordinator of the Neighbourhood Management system in Salford adds:

> "In the beginning it was very much about the kind of pure Porto Alegre model which was about the whole council budget and how we could identify positions in that budget which we then could allocate to community projects (...). And I think that it was a little bit hard and radical really."[27]

In other words: the situation was characterised by the difficult, or even impossible, reconciliation between the quite radical position of Community Pride, trying to implement a Porto Algre-style process; and a perspective of politicians and civil servants aiming at a greater involvement of local people, but within the existing institutional framework. This conflict is probably the main reason why no qualitative step forward in the relation between CPI and council could be made for several years (roughly from 2001 to 2006). Another reason could be linked to the sensitivity from the part of Salford officers and politicians towards a Manchester-based organisation like CPI. Moreover, the councillors or officers from Salford might not have seen a real need for modifying the existing approaches because of the quite long tradition of community participation in Salford.[28]

The situation only changed after several years. As shown above (chapter 6), the first 'official' PB process in the UK was organised in the city of Bradford in the year 2004 and other cities followed this example (Keighley, Sunderland, Newcastle, London Harrow etc.). Moreover, the national political context changed and was more and more directed towards the direct involvement and 'empowerment' of local citizens and communities. Furthermore, CPI/the PB Unit made a change of strategy: whereas they initially concentrated on the lobby work with

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[26] Interview with Mick Walbank, Neighbourhood Manageer, 27.2.2008.
[27] Interview with Neighbourhood Management Coordinator for Salford, 15.9.2008.
[28] Interview with Neighbourhood Management Coordinator for Salford, 15.9.2008.

councillors, they decided at a certain point to "metaphorically knock on different doors",[29] that is council officers, especially those working in the neighbourhood management system. Members of CPI showed them the DVD about the Bradford project, which provided a concrete picture of participatory budgeting (instead of abstract theoretical model) and showed that PB was not necessarily a very 'radical' process. It eventually convinced two senior managers in the neighbourhood management to implement such a procedure – and thereby put an end to the yearlong discussions around the topic in Salford. These two senior officers asked one of the most long-serving managers, Mick Walbank, if he would be willing to implement a PB process in his area – what he was.

3) A neighbourhood manager from Salford: involving ‚local people'

Mick Walbank's engagement for local citizen participation is not rooted in an active civil society or party political engagement, but in a personal and professional conviction about the usefulness of public consultation and participation, without arguing in terms of an overall normative concept or frame of citizen participation. He aims to "devolve decision-making to local people and to involve people in a sort of meaningful way" – for example within Community Committees or in the framework of a participatory budgeting process.[30] For him, the interest of the latter process lies in the fact that it, potentially, creates a broader involvement of local people. Moreover, it has the advantage of valuing the perspectives of "local people" against the one of engineers and experts.

> "I mean the whole idea of doing it this way is that it's definitely not the engineer's priorities, it's local people. And I've had discussions with [a technical officer dealing with the PB process]. And basically I said if this is a scheme that you don't really like, in a way this doesn't matter if local people like it. If this is a scheme that you think would be dangerous then I think you should tell us. Then I don't think we should do this because it will make the road less safe (...). But if it's just that you wouldn't have done it because you think it isn't important then…that's not the issue if local people decided it's important, then we should go ahead with it."

Mick Walbank became interested in the topic of participation in the framework of his master degree he wrote at Manchester University about public perceptions of pollution through

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[29] Interview with Kezia Lavan, former member of PB Unit, 12.6.2007.
[30] This presentation is based on two interviews with M. Walbank, on 18.9.2008 and 27.2.2009. Direct quotations are marked with "".

public bus transport (1978). Also his PhD dealt with a topic located at the cross-section of environmental concerns and public participation (1984). During his PhD he already worked as a Chief Officer to Salford Community Health Council, dealing with the involvement of the public in the Health Service. Between 1990 and 1995, he hold various roles in Salford & Trafford Health Authority, before taking the position as neighbourhood manager in Salford. In the framework of this work, he is in direct contact with the local community groups, but also deals with the neighbourhood budget and the relations with other city organisations (the work of community development worker in the neighbourhood team is closer linked to the local community groups).

For Walbank, participatory budgeting is not linked to a broader transformative political and/or social process, but constitutes a particular, interesting approach to local citizen engagement for the spending of public funds. This is the reason why for him, the spending modalities for the devolved budgets in Salford community committees represent also a form of participatory budgeting:

> "I would say it is a form of PB. As far as the decision is made by local people, there is deliberation by a small group and less deliberation by a bigger group; you get a recommendation from the first group and the decision is made in public."

This perspective represents the widespread procedural model of participatory budgeting in the UK in form of local grant spending.[31] His position is not linked to or influenced by the 'original' Porto Alegre model, but considers participatory budgeting as a means to involving parts of the local residents for spending specific public funds.

III. A low profile, experimental approach to participatory budgeting

Although Salford has been amongst the first cities experimenting with PB in Great Britain, the two processes realised so far in Claremont / Weaste & Seedley (nearly 21,400 inhabitants

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[31] Walbank knows the national situation through the contacts with the PB Unit and his participation at a national conference about PB in Manchester (2007). Finally, Walbank says to feel "empowered" to defend this perspective after the comment of a Spanish participant during a PB conference in Spain (2006), where this person told him that the system of devolved budgets and Community Committees was one of the best PB examples he had ever heard of.

by 2004) do not represent the most far-reaching models in the UK.[32] They consisted of one (2007) or several (2008) public events for spending 100.000 pounds for highways works, i.e. roads, walking or cycling paths. The modest shape reflects the lack of active political support or of a broad bottom-up movement, as well as of a new frame of citizen participation (or of the attempt to redefine an existing one). Moreover, the procedure has been organised on a low-profile basis by a small team within one city area, at the margins of the political system. There is no comparison between the broad publicity, strong branding and huge preparatory work of the PB processes in Poitou-Charentes (or Berlin Lichtenberg) and Salford. The local councillor in Salford, who had been involved in the steering group, even felt embarrassed about the media attention the participatory budget pilot project provoked.[33]

The initiative to devolve 100.000 pounds to the eight local community committees was taken by the Lead member for Planning (2006), who had introduced the budget consultation process in the 1990s. At this time, the debates around PB had lasted already several years. Asked by his superiors to start thinking about a PB process, Mick Walbank, influenced by the DVD about the Bradford participatory budgeting process, estimated that this money constituted a good possibility for a PB process. Moreover, no established system existed about how to spend this new and specific amount of devolved service money.[34]

After his Community Committee, who normally would have received the funding, formally agreed to the PB procedure, he constituted the steering group and started to launch the process in the area of Claremont / Weaste & Seedley. The steering team comprised a local councillor, a member of the PB Unit, a resident and a senior officer of Urban Vision (private firm carrying out highways' works for the council). No official frame of citizen participation guided the work of this group, but a pragmatic orientation influenced by the Bradford pilot project and the local possibilities of action.[35] The goals were to create a more open, participatory process, going beyond the limited participation in community committee and

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[32] Another PB process was launched in 2008 in another city area, East Salford. It follows a similar procedural model as in Claremont / Weaste & Seedley, but organised the PB process about the highways' money for two years, that is 200.000 pounds. The process consisted of three meetings organised in one day.
[33] Interview with member of PB Unit, September 2007. Following to this person, this sort of concern emerged in most pilot projects, which underlines once more the little party political attention PB had in the UK, at least before the existence of the "national strategy" (CLG 2008).
[34] Interview with Mick Walbank, 27.2.2009.
[35] I made interviews with all members of neighbourhood management team in Claremont / Weaste & Seedley and the member of the PB Unit who participated in the steering group, but not with the resident and the local councillor who were part of this group.

budget consultation meetings; and to confer participants with direct decision-making powers – instead of the existing system of a small 'budget sub-group' developing project proposals, or of councillors spending council money.

The first 'participatory budget' event in Claremont / Weaste & Seedley took place on May 21 2007. It consisted of an open meeting where participants voted upon concrete, local schemes, which were then realised by Urban Vision.[36] The event took place in a public building within a park of the city. In the meeting room, chairs were placed in front of a big screen. On one side, tea and coffee was available for the participants; on the other side written information and photos of every of the 23 schemes about highway-related issues were presented on tables (one scheme per table, for example about traffic calming or street lightening), as well as an accident map of the whole area. Parts of the schemes had been taken from the existing 'community action plan', other had been proposed by citizens for the PB meeting (communicated via telephone, mail, or a previous public meeting). Before the event, highway engineers of Urban Vision established a rough cost estimate of the different proposals; they went from several thousand pounds to more than 100.000.

Forty-seven people attended the meeting. The neighbourhood team used different methods in order to publicise the event (everybody of the area was invited to attend the meeting): Community Committee or other public meetings, meetings with particular groups, the local newsletter, an email-list of around 100 residents, and phone calls (just before the meeting). In the beginning, the local neighbourhood Manager welcomed the participants, explained the process and invited them to get some tea and coffee. Thereafter, participants had around an hour to go around, look at the schemes, and ask questions about them to the chief engineer or the neighbourhood manager and community development worker. There was no official discussion phase, but more informal discussions taking place amongst participants, who could also write their comments on a flipchart. The planning group had explicitly decided *not* to include oral presentations of the schemes during the meeting, as they feared they could affect the neutrality of the decision-making process.[37]

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[36] As I could not attend the meeting, the following description (as well as the one of the following year) is based on the information from interviews with the local actors, the DVD about the process, the work by Kezia Lavan (2007) and the internal evaluation of the neighbourhood management.

[37] The presentation of schemes by the applicants is a widely spread practice in UK participatory budgeting events and, indeed, resembles sometimes more to a school or neighbourhood party (young and old people singing, playing guitar, etc.) than an event for allocating a public budget (see a selection of events in the DVD "The story so far", available on the webpage of PB Unit).

After the informal discussion phase, the voting process took place. It contained two stages. In the first round, all projects had to be scored on scorecards from 1 (lowest priority) to 10 (top priority) by the participants. In the second round, only the top 10 from the first round (which had been projected on the screen in the front part of the room) were scored again. Finally, four projects (which together add up until 100.000 euros) were retained for funding. Some local councillors were present, but did not have an active role in the process and did not vote, neither (they had decided to leave the vote to the residents). Whilst members of the Neighbourhood Management Team calculated the votes, participants could again take a cup of tea or coffee and follow an improvised video presentation. In the end, the 'winners' of the evening were presented and people were asked to evaluate the event using E-voting. After the event, the administrative services started the implementation process of voted schemes.

Overall, participants made a very positive evaluation of the event – although there was some discontent as to the modified or late project implementation through Urban Vision. In several cases, the implementation of projects caused problems once the voted schemes were evaluated in more detail by the technical engineers (costs higher than calculated before; technical problems[38]). This is linked to the fact that before the participatory meeting, they did not have the time to provide more than rough cost estimates; moreover, not all officers might have been convinced of the process that represents more work for them than the previous approach:[39]

> "In the past, this money [for highways' works] would have been decided by some senior officers and a councillor for the whole city of Salford, this would be 800.000 pounds. And they would maybe do 2 or 3 schemes. Now it has been devolved to Community Committees, of which two use participatory budgeting. (...) They may be coming up each with..20 possible schemes. So obviously the time of estimating the cost of 3 big schemes and the job of costing up to 50 schemes [is different]. You can't get a precise cost estimate. So what you have to get is a rough [estimation]. [This is why] people are voting on limited information. Which is all we can get. We can't get every scheme fully investigated."[40]

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[38] Similar problems occurred in the first years of the 'High school PB' in Poitou-Charentes.

[39] Until today, the great majority of voted schemes has been carried out by Urban Vision and others are just about to be realised; in the case that the original proposal had to be changed, this (new) decision was taken by Community Committee members. In order to reduce the problems in the communication between the neighbourhood management and Urban Vision, a single contact person within Urban Vision (instead of different people) now deals with the devolved highways money.

[40] Interview with Mick Walbank, Neighbourhood Manager, 18.9.2008.

Despite these technical problems, the organisers made an overall positive evaluation of the first PB process. More people than expected came to the event – although the level was still very low; moreover, around half of the participants had been older than 55 years, and there were no young people or children. This is the reason why they tried to increase the number of participants and to get a greater spread of ages for the next PB event – once the council had again devolved 100.000 pounds to every community committee area in January 2008. In order to decrease the access barriers and thereby increase the number of participants, the second PB event in Claremont / Weaste & Seedley was much stronger focussed on the voting dimension of the process, rather than on a common discussion process. In other words: the emphasis was put on the input legitimacy of the process, rather than on its procedural quality or output legitimacy. Over two days in May 2008, six events within the whole territory of the area were organised. They were no meetings with a certain agenda and a common discussion process (formal or more informal like the first time), but organised as 'drop-ins' where people could simply 'pop in' and have a vote (after reading, or not, the description of schemes displaced in the room).[41] Some members of the neighbourhood team were standing outside the meeting venue and trying to make people enter – successfully, as at least 39 of the overall number of participants (145) joined the meeting in this way. Amongst the participants were more women than men (the first meeting seems to have been quite equilibrated in terms of gender) and they included several teenagers and people in their twenties.[42]

The neighbourhood manager is aware of the loss of quality that the augmentation of participants engenders. He thinks, however, that a traditional meeting-format would reduce the number of participants and therefore contradict one of the central aims of the process: to increase the number of people engaged in the area.

> "If you had a discussion there might be a chance to give some information about where the streets was [and other things] (...). If we did, we would get less people. (...)We would have to convey for a time, we couldn't drag people from the streets to go to a meeting; now we can drag them in and tell them you have a say for 5 or 10 minutes. But obviously you cannot say 'come in for the next 2 hours'. (...). [There is] a trade-off between getting people to the door and a process where in the meeting you don't have pretty much opportunity to deliberation, to discuss, to share." [43]

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[41] This time, no member of Urban Vision was present at the meetings for answering questions or providing participants with information.

[42] Some of the 'drop ins' had been organised within school buildings. 148 people represent less than one percent of the population.

[43] Interview with Mick Walbank, 18.9.2008.

This example confirms the potential tension that exists between participation and deliberation (or between participatory and deliberative democracy theory), which was mentioned in chapter 2: one either focuses one a broad participation, or on a quality-based discussion process. The combination of both aspects is more difficult and demands a step beyond traditional forms of citizen engagement. For this to happen, however, there has been no political support in Salford and no additional funding available.

In Claremont / Weaste & Seedley, the impetus for the second meeting clearly laid on the input legitimacy and the process formally fulfils the initial goals by the local steering team. It is a more open and accessible space than existing community committees (where only community representatives and councillors have the right to vote and have a 'full' legitimacy); participation rates are higher than in these meetings; and participants can take decisions about aspects that directly concern their lives. Under the previous system, most of the proposed schemes would have never been considered by the official experts. At the same time, it appears highly improbably that such a process can have any impact on the participants in terms of a political and/or social 'empowerment' or be part of a policy that aims to tackle poverty and social exclusion. In the end, it would not be fundamentally different to organise the voting process via a survey, sms or the internet.

Conclusion

Despite the recent support for participatory budgeting by the city council as part of the aim to increase the social inclusion in the city and to "empower" local communities (Salford City Council 2008: 28), there seems to be no political will amongst Salford council members to go beyond the existing approach. So far, no politician has seen an interest in developing a profile around participatory democracy, or in proposing a more far-reaching model than the existing framework for local community involvement. If the situation does not change, the initiative for setting up such a process will probably remain in the hands of local officers, who implement more participatory forms of steering within the existing institutional setting of the neighbourhood management structure (community committees, devolved budgets, etc.) – and

within the limits of available funding.[44] The integration of a PB process has not led to a modification of the overall *référentiel* of public policies in Salford, or of the sectoral *référentiel* of highways policies. The process has been set up at the margins of the political/administrative system, in relation to a very specific and limited sum of money. As such, the Claremont / Weaster & Seedley procedure represents a case of procedural assimilation of the Porto Alegre model to the existing institutional setting.

In procedural terms, it is situated between the participatory budgeting ideal-type models of 'proximity participation' and 'community development at local and city level'. With the latter, it shares the emphasis on 'community participation' and the ranking and voting by participants. It is, however, situated closer to the 'proximity' type of PB, because the procedure is anchored at the micro-local level (it does not involve citywide questions) and because the influence of participants on the rules is very limited. The degree of political/political innovation is therefore quite limited. This is shown in the following table, which summarises the process analysis of the previous pages.

Table 10: Degree of political/procedural innovation of the 'PB process in Claremont / Weaste & Seedley'

Degree of political/procedural Innovation	Impact on rules and management	Decision-making	Level of participation	Measures for increasing participation	Scope of influence
PB in Claremont / Weaste & Seedley	No	Yes	Micro-level (single city area)	Limited	Very limited: one area

The reasons for this particular shape of the PB process in Salford and of its development are the result of the difficulties during the process of accomodation. The initial plans of Community Pride Initiative, inspired by the Porto Alegre model (and the ideal of a participatory democracy based on local community empowerment), did encounter no political support in Salford, because they were considered as too complex and too radical to realise. The situation changed only with the importation of 'autochtonous' models of participatory budgeting in form of local grant spending. The limited possibilities of action of the local organising team (no additional funding), however, make it difficult to mobilise large parts of

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[44] The process involves 4,67 euros per resident of the area of Claremont / Weaste & Seedley. The most far-reaching processes in Europe involve more than 100 euro per person. For instance, the ‚High school PB' involves over 300 euro per member of the educative community, which is 9% of the budget allocated to high schools (Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b).

the population without developing the procedure into a mere voting event. A further problem is the instability of funding. The 100.000 pounds of highways' money for every of the eight Community Committee areas are devolved on a yearly basis and necessitate each time a new decision by the council (by January). The Council provides no planning security in the sense of devolving the money on a stable basis. It is an open question if the council could devolve the money on a more stable basis, or if it depends itself on the instable funding provided once a year by central government and therefore cannot make a long-term commitment.

All in all, the participatory budgeting process in Claremont / Weaste & Seedley sheds a light on current policy developments in the UK. It reflects the policy developments in the domain of citizen participation, marked by a growing focus on the 'devolution' of power down to the neighbourhoods, but without modifying the overall, local and national power hierarchies. In this perspective, 'communities' should be involved in the decision and allocation of local services, but not influence the core political questions of a municipality or city. They become part of a broader management and partnership structure – but it is an open question if this structure can be considered as a more democratic form of steering. At the same time, and as outlined in chapter 6, there do exist much more far-reaching and complex examples of participatory budgeting in the UK, like for instance in the city of Newcastle. The present analysis should therefore be completed with a detailed consideration of one or several of these processes, but this has to happen in another research project. These processes might lead to a 'Forth Way' of enhanced municipal powers and of a participation of citizens at a more strategic level of the public decision-making process. Moreover, the impressive spread of the process within the "national strategy" of PB might provoke a growing interest for the topic amongst citizens and communities themselves and may lead to a series of 'bottom-up' initiatives like happened more recently in Germany. The next chapter is situated in the German context and focuses the attention on the PB process in the district of Berlin Lichtenberg. This third and last case of participatory budgeting dealt with here will provide us again with a different picture as to the processes of adaptation of the Brazilian procedure to a new cost culture.

Chapter 10

Participatory budgeting in Berlin Lichtenberg: from Porto Alegre to the citizens' commune

The participatory budgeting process in the district of Berlin Lichtenberg has been the first process in a big German city, as well as the first case in Germany where civil society activists brought the process on the political agenda (mediated diffusion) and where the initiators and organisers actively referred to the Porto Alegre model. Until then, German participatory budgeting institutions had been introduced by organisations and ideas linked to the New Public Management reform agenda.[1] The Lichtenberg process is therefore an exceptional case, at least with regard to the scale of action and the ambitions of the organisers, namely the district mayor, member of the 'Left' party[2]. Like the initiators of the 'High school participatory budget' in Poitou-Charentes, they wanted to go beyond the existing practice of participatory budgeting and initiate a new, more far-reaching type of process. I will show in this chapter that the process confers citizens with more influence and scope of action than in the models of the first period of PB in Germany, but does not modify the fact that policy makers alone judge the legitimacy and feasibility of citizens' perspectives. This is the reason why it represents above all a developed form of user-oriented administration and has led to the confirmation and strengthening of the *référentiel* of the district administration, the citizens' commune.

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[1] See chapter 7.

[2] This is a relatively new, radical left-wing party (created in 2005). In the 2009 Parliamentary elections, the 'Linke' received 11,9% of votes (strong differences between former West and East Germany; in the former Eastern part it is stronger than the SPD) and probably will remain an important party left of the SPD at national (and at *Länder*/municipal) level. The Linke has a different membership base in former East and West Germany. In the former Western part, it is mainly composed of former members of the Social Democrats, the Green party and trade union activists (and some members of the communist DKP and other radical left-wing groups). In the former Eastern part, most adherents come from the 'Linkspartei.PDS' (Party of Democratic Socialism), the communist party which was funded after the breakdown of the GDR and its main party, the SED.

One key for understanding this result is the very frame of citizen participation, the citizens' commune. Despite an overall more 'radical' discourse in Lichtenberg than elsewhere in Germany, the official goals of the citizens' commune in Lichtenberg did never involve a modification of the institutional framework of representative democracy, but a broadening of the possibilities of citizen participation within the existing setting. The aim was to develop a more democratic model of participation than the existing PB procedures, but not to provide citizens with direct decision-making powers about parts of the municipal budget.

This third case investigated in the present study is the most complex one. It involves a double political structure (Berlin as federal state and Lichtenberg as Berlin district) and the parallel development of participatory budgeting in Berlin and Lichtenberg. In addition, much more actors than in Poitou-Charentes or Salford have been involved in this process. The following investigation will therefore deal only with those aspects that are important for the present purpose.[3] This involves, first, a short presentation of the Berlin and Lichtenberg political context, as well as of some of the involved key actors.[4] It means, second, to scrutinise the functioning of the PB process, of its development and results.

I. The creation of a new political project

Berlin was the first city in Germany where civil society activists, influenced by the Porto Alegre model and a huge corruption scandal in the German capital, brought participatory budgeting on the political agenda. Together with other involved actors, they convinced a member of the Federal Institute of Political Education to support the process, as well as the newly elected mayor of Lichtenberg. The mayor could gain the support of the district council for the initiative and put it to the heart of the new political project of developing the district to a citizens' commune via the strengthening of citizen participation.[5] Moreover, the PB initiative was integrated into a citywide, administrative reform programme aiming to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of public spending. The introduction of participatory

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[3] For a detailed analysis of the single steps of the introduction of PB in Berlin see Brangsch, Brangsch (2006) and Weise (2007). A statistical analysis of the results of the first-year process has been delivered by Klages, Damarus (2007). The existing literature does not contain a presentation of the involved key actors, which will be delivered here.

[4] For reasons of scope, it is not possible to present more people, or to provide a detailed presentation of all perspectives.

[5] "Beschluss der Hauptversammlung des PDS Bezirksverbandes Lichtenberg", 22.11.2003.

budgeting in Berlin is therefore situated at the crossroads of democratisation initiatives, the New Public Management agenda and the citizens' commune as frame of citizen participation.[6]

1) Berlin: "poor, but sexy"?

Klaus Wowereit, Social Democratic mayor of Berlin (3,4 million inhabitants; 2006), once presented the city of Berlin as "poor, but sexy". Therewith, he alluded to the catastrophic, financial situation of the German capital, but which at the same time has the flair of being an open, alternative, and culturally vibrant city. It is known for its tradition of left-wing activism and squat culture and was, last but not least, the first big German city with a participatory budgeting process.

The city of Berlin has a particular political and institutional structure: it is a city *and* a federal state (a 'city-state', *Stadtstaat*). Therefore, its administration and government are based on two levels, the one of the districts and the one of the city (federal state) as a whole. The districts of the city are like municipalities, though with less powers and competences (in domains like libraries, parks, culture, social aids, etc.). Moreover, they cannot raise taxes, but get all funds from the city-government; these add up to around three to four billion euro per year, which is around 20% of the city-budget of 20 billion euro. The relationship between the citywide government, the Senate, and the elected councils of the districts is characterised by regular conflicts with regard to competences and funding, although all important political decisions are made by the Senate.

At the beginning of the new Millennium, one of the biggest corruption scandals in the history of the city was discovered ['*Bankenskandal*']. The scandal was the result of corrupt ties between political parties and the economic sector, namely the city-owned bank society and the Christian Democratic party, then governing in coalition with the Social Democrats (Herzberg 2008: 150).[7] The direct costs for the city were 1,7 billion euro; in addition, it had to

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[6] Moreover, it is worth mentioning a more indirect source of influence: the experiment with citizen juries, introduced in the framework of the 'Social City' programme (Röcke 2005; Sintomer, Röcke 2005). These juries were discussed in the preparatory phase of the participatory budgeting process in Berlin and continue to be a source of inspiration with regard to its further development in the German capital (e.g. Bündnis 90/Die Grünen 2009).

[7] One aspect of this scandal is the (partly) privatisation of the main public service providers for water, engergy and living by the city government. With more than 11 billion euros of 'income' through privatisations, Berlin is

stand surety with a sum of 21,6 billion euro. These amounts added to the already high burden of debts in the German capital. Berlin is amongst those *Länder* in Germany with the highest level of debts, over 60 billion euro in 2006.[8] Moreover, the city is fighting against high unemployment rates (between 1990 and 1997, unemployment rates have more than doubled and have been close to 18% in 2008) and the increasing concentration, and mutual reinforcement, of economic, social, cultural and political processes of exclusion (Häußermann 2000). Nearly 30% of children in Berlin are poor, which is more than in all other federal states.[9] Since 1999, the city government has therefore introduced a programme of social urban renewal called Social City [*Soziale Stadt*]. Influenced by similar programmes in France and the UK, it aims to combat these tendencies through the allocation of additional funds,[10] the set up of local partnership boards and the more direct participation of inhabitants.

In consequence of the banking scandal, the Christian Democratic party whip was condemned; in 2001, a new 'red-red' government between Social Democrats and the 'Left' party was elected. Moreover, the scandal motivated civil society actors to advocate for a participatory budget procedure Porto Alegre-style in order to increase the transparency of public spending, to prevent the misuse of money and to fight corruption. Single members of the 'Left' party were also linked to these initiatives, which involved several groups: the group working on 'participation' in the framework of the Agenda 21 process, the 'Initiative for a participatory budget process in Berlin'[11] and the 'Working group participatory budgeting Berlin'. The latter group played a decisive role in Berlin. Members of the 'working group' could convince an officer of the Federal Institute for Political Education [*Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung*,

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one of the German frontrunners in this domain. Not only the financial distress of the city have played a role in this regard, but also the personal interests of politicians (Herzberg 2008: 150).

[8] The debts increased from 10,82 billion euro in 1991 to the astronomic amount of 64,2 billion in 2006 (Tagesspiegel, 20.10.2006) In 2002, the city initiated proceedings at the Federal Constitutional Court in order to get a special financial support. The main argumentation was that the city was suffering particularly heavy burdens as to the unification process. The city suffered, it is true, from the massive reduction of 'special grants' by the national government in the beginning of the 1990s, as well as from the economic collapse in both parts of the city (in the West due to the end of special subventions and the fact that the industrial structure was still a Fordist one). This attempt was, however, dismissed by the Court in 2007.

[9] The German medium is 13,4%: 11,3% in former West Germany, 24,4, in the former East (Herzberg 2008: 152).

[10] Whereas 17 neighbourhoods were initially part of the programme, the number has risen to 35 in 2008. In the whole country, there exist more than 390 'problem areas' in around 260 local authorities (2006). The funding between the years 2007 to 2013 adds up to 151 million euro.

[11] This initiative, which organised workshops and seminars, brought together representatives of diverse organisations linked to democratisation issues: attac Berlin, Agenda-Fachforum Partizipation, Berliner Entwicklungspolitischen Ratschlag, Gender Budget Initiative Berlin, Mehr Demokratie e.V., Netzwerk Zukunft e.V., Stadtforum von Unten, Unabhängiges Institut für Umweltfragen.

a state-funded institution subordinate to the Ministry of the Interior], Heino Gröf, to support the implementation of a trial process in the German capital (2003).

In a parallel move, members of the 'Left' party, partly linked to the 'Working group participatory budgeting Berlin', persuaded the Lichtenberg mayor Christina Emmrich to support such a procedure in her district (2003). She convinced the district council to take an official decision of introducing a PB process in Lichtenberg (2003). Since the outset, it has been linked to the goal to develop the district to a citizens' commune.[12] Thereafter, the district administration, supported by Left politicians in the Berlin Senate, managed to integrate this project in a city-wide reform programme, the 'agenda for rearrangement' [*Neuordnungsagenda*] in order to get funding for the district initiative. The 'agenda' is part of a series of reform programmes the Senate has initiated since the unification process, when the city faced the enormous duty to merge two completely different cities into one territorial and political entity. Between 1995 and 1999, the Senate introduced the 'New Steering Model' [*Neues Steuerungsmodell]*, the German adaptation of New Public Management reform ideas.[13] In addition, the number of districts was reduced from 23 to 12 in order to save costs. The 'agenda for rearrangement' aimed at a further continuation of these reform initiatives. It contained more than 50 projects, supposed to lead to "more performances, less costs". The participatory budget initiative in Berlin Lichtenberg has become one of them and provided the Lichtenberg organisers with a funding of 100,000 euros to carry out the first participatory budgeting process. For the district mayor like other involved actors before, however, the new instrument was mainly seen as political process, supposed to democratise the process of budget allocation, and not as a tool within a broad process of Public Management reform.

In the following three sections, the background of some of the key actors involved with the importation and implementation of PB in Berlin and Lichtenberg are presented, as well as the development of the citizens' commune project in Berlin Lichtenberg.

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[12] See the official party Resolution for the introduction of a citizens' commune "Beschluss der Hauptversammlung des PDS Bezirksverbandes Lichtenberg", 22.11.2003. The citizens' commune became the official frame of the district in 2005 (Bezirksamt Lichtenberg von Berlin 2005).
[13] See chapter 7. A particular feature of the Berlin process is the introduction of the 'product-budget' [*Produkthaushat*]. It consists of establishing the costs of every singly service or 'product' (a place in the kindergarten for example), which allows to carry out cost-comparisons of 'products' between the districts.

2) The origins of PB in Berlin

The journalist Anselm Weidner travelled to the first World Social Forum in Porto Alegre (January 2001) and thereafter founded the 'Working group participatory budgeting Berlin' (March 2002).[14] He was not only inspired and fascinated by the Porto Alegre model as such; the particular situation in Berlin, too, provoked this decision:

> „When I came back [from Porto Alegre], I came back in the beginning of February [2001], the newspaper headlines in Berlin were all referring to the bank scandal. The bank scandal (…) has been the biggest financial affair in Germany ever. (...) It was strongly linked to...party sleaze – so actually to those things the participatory budgeting process in Porto Alegre aimed to fight against. (...) So I thought: 'What we need here is a participatory budget!' This was somehow ...obvious, no? We need to assure that public finances are under better control and that people can more participate [in their allocation] and understand where they come from and where they go."

Weidner's political and ideological background is strongly rooted in the 68-movement, his "formative period". Like Sophie Bouchet-Petersen (designer of 'High school participatory budget'), Weidner represents the type of '68 activist' who has moved from 'revolution to reform', but who maintains quite radical perspectives. As a law student, he was actively involved in political activism, for example in the framework of the 'Socialist German Student association' (since 1968) or the 'Revolutionary Battle' that carried out many activities in factories and aimed at joined operations with the workers. Following to him, 68 not only "blew up the leaden Adenauer times [first German chancellor], and this in a very imaginative, lively and ... very democratic way"; but it also represented the "breakthrough of democracy in Germany" in the sense of a "liberal understanding of civil rights; of the idea that civil rights are something which...you need to protect, which you need to fight for".[15]

Weidner's support of a participatory budgeting process *à la* Porto Alegre is rooted in a critique of the Bertelsmann foundation, an influential German think-tank who co-organised

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[14] This presentation is based on two interviews with Weidner (15.4.2008, 10.10.2008). Direct citations from the interview are marked with "". The 'working group' included the following people: two consultants working about participation, a professor of urban planning, and Petra Brangsch; she is working for the 'Left' party in the Parliament and is member of the 'municipal political forum' (*Kommunalpolitisches Forum*), an organisation close to, but independent of this party. Until the end of 2005, Yves Sintomer (French scholar of participatory democracy) was also member of the group.

[15] There is an ongoing discussion in Germany about the 'pros' and 'cons' of the '68'-movement. Whereas the 'supporters' broadly follow the interpretation of Weidner, 'opponents' either deny any long-lasting effect of the student movements or even criticise, supposed, negative effects like a loss of morality, etc.

the first regional pilot projects of PB in Germany.[16] For him, 'Bertelsmann PB' represents the antipode with regard to the participatory institution of the Brazilian city, in other words: "the neo-liberal abuse of this beautiful idea". Bertelsmann would not sustain participatory budgeting in order to strengthen democracy and citizen participation, but with the aim "to legitimise austerity budgets" and to justify the reduction of public expenditures:

> „Bertelsmann plays a game with the people in order to... (...) get more legitimacy for...for less public expenditures. The overarching heading is to destroy the state, to say it with very simple words; or at least to weaken the state and to make the citizens presumably strong. To strengthen citizens means here to strengthen private companies...In this regard they are basically not interested in what people want."

Perhaps not every member of the 'working group' would sustain this radical critique of the foundation's political orientation. Petra Brangsch, however, another associate of the group, does. Together with her husband Lutz Brangsch, a long-standing supporter of participatory budgeting *Brazilian style*[17], she has been involved in the discussions since the very beginning.[18] She was member of the 'working group' and personal advisor of the 'Left' party MP Peter Zotl, at this time chairing the parliamentary committee about the 'agenda for rearrangement'. Zotl became interested in the topic and therefore supported the initiative of the district of Lichtenberg to integrate a participatory budgeting process to the reform agenda (September 2004).[19] Moreover, Petra Brangsch was chairperson of the 'municipal political forum' (an organisation working on issues of local politics close to the 'Left' party), and contributed to the discussion through the publication of various texts (e.g.

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[16] See chapter 7. It is not possible here to discuss the national and global influence and political orientation of this foundation. For many left wing activists it constitutes a highly suspicious 'big player' lobbying for its goals outside democratic control. Herzberg (2008) rejects the reproach of 'neo-liberalism' against the Bertelsmann foundation. Following his argumentation, this foundation does/did aim to explore possibilities for reducing public spending in reaction to the crisis of municipal finances, but not to introduce the minimal state.

[17] Lutz Brangsch is amongst the few Berlin (and German) 'PB actors' who travelled to Porto Alegre. He has contacts with several project partners of the Brazilian Workers' Party. Until 1999, he was member of the directory of the party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), before moving to the party foundation, which is linked to, but independent of the party directory. By coincidence, he became the representative of this foundation within the PB 'platform' set up by Heino Gröf (below).

[18] Petra Brangsch is interested in the topic of participation since her Ph.D dissertation she wrote at the 'Akademie für Gesellschaftswissenschaften' (which was attached to the party 'central committee') of East Berlin (Zotl was in the first period her supervisor) and defended it 1990 in Moscow. The 'acadamy' did not exist any more after 1990, but Zotl could provide her a job in the parliamentary group of the post-communist party PDS in the Berlin Parliament. Later on she moved as personal referee to the PDS parliamentary group in the German Parliament (Interview with Petra Brangsch, 1.9.2008).

[19] Peter Zotl, who is specialised in municipal politics and local democracy and already worked on these issues in times of the GDR, had occupied this position since 2001. Petra Brangsch convinced him to come to the meetings of the 'PB working group' and he became interested in the topic, being broadly supportive of the political orientation of his party towards more direct citizen engagement (Interview with Peter Zotl, 12.3.2008).

kommunalpolitisches forum 2003; Brangsch, Brangsch 2005; 2007). In a book about the topic, the Brangsch couple mention their astonishment that

> "an idea, which originated in Porto Alegre in the surrounding of a left party, was first discovered and politically exploited by international development organisations and in Germany by the Bertelsmann foundation, one, if not the neo-liberal think-tank (...). [In Germany], participatory budgeting has been and is considered as a possibility to integrate people in the neo-liberal transformation of society, to ensure social and political stability despite the cutback of public services" (Brangsch, Brangsch 2006: 9-11).

The leading idea of Weidner and Petra Brangsch was therefore to implement *another* perspective of PB, one based on the goal of "transforming society", and not of its "integration" into society like for Bertelsmann.[20] The close link that exist(ed) in Germany between the idea of a *Bürgerhaushalt* (the German term for 'participatory budget') and the Bertelsmann foundation is one reason why the directory of the Left-party in Berlin-Lichtenberg presented the PB pilot project in terms of a "democratisation and control of budget politics" and not as the introduction of a 'participatory budgeting' process.[21]

For Weidner, citizen participation should not just be the "cherry on the cake" [*Sahnehäubchen*], but linked to a broad renewal of democracy "from below" and therefore be thought of in terms of a long-lasting process that "needs to take roots within civil society" and not as a one-off event as in the first period of PB. Weidner pursues the ideal of a participatory democracy Porto Alegre-style (combination of direct participation with representative democracy). Yet, the 'working group' members "did not discuss about how to implement a radical bottom-up council model of democracy" or how to promote the pure Porto Alegre model in Berlin.[22] Instead, they used the Brazilian and other examples (from Germany and France) as a background information or inspiration of how to democratise the existing institutional framework for citizen participation in the German capital (Arbeitsgruppe Bürgerhaushalt Berlin 2002a; 2002b; kommunalpolitisches Forum 2003). The crucial question in the regard was, following to Weidner: "how to find an equation between delegation, citizen control and direct citizen participation"?

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[20] Petra Brangsch, Interview with Petra and Lutz Brangsch, 5.1.2008.
[21] Because it is much shorter, the term *Bürgerhaushalt* remained however the abbreviation for the long title of the official project „Partizipative Haushaltsaufstellung, -entscheidung und – kontrolle im Bezirk" (17th of June 2003, motion put forward by the district executive of Berlin-Lichtenberg).
[22] Interview with Anselm Weidner, 10.10.2008.

This capacity of combing political commitment with a pragmatic policy-orientation is also typical of Heino Gröf's approach. The proposals of the group immediately 'resonated' with his democratic orientation, which is rooted in his long-standing, political and professional support of more direct civic engagement.

3) A long-standing professional engagement for more citizen participation

Throughout his career, Heino Gröf aimed at a greater involvement of ordinary citizens to the political system, a goal he pursued within and against the Social Democratic party.[23] Despite different ideological roots, Gröf supports like Weidner and the 'working group' the overall aim to democratise the existing system and particularly the process of municipal budget allocation. Gröf does not label his perspective about citizen participation, for instance by talking about participatory democracy or the citizens' commune. His perspective is situated in-between these frames, particularly the perspective developed by Banner (1999) and the participatory democracy frame of Bouchet-Petersen.[24]

Heino Gröf, born in 1944 as eldest child of seven, has been an activist since a very young age. First, he was active in a church framework, thereafter with the youth organisation of the Social Democratic Party called 'Young Socialists' ('Jusos'). At an early age, he took over responsibilities, as group leader or regional headman of the 'Jusos'. He studied law in the city of Bonn and got a student job in the *Baracke*, the then party directory of the Social Democratic party (he took the membership card at the age of 21). In the *Baracke* he was "in direct proximity to Willy Brandt and Herbert Wehner" [25] and thereafter came directly to the Federal Institute for Political Education (FIPE), working in the television department. From there, he was delegated to the Ministry of the Interior. He contributed to the official recognition of the Green Party and the state financing of its foundation, as well as of the foundation 'Mitarbeit', which supports civil society projects and 'democracy from below'.

After the political change of 1982 (Helmut Kohl displaced Helmut Schmidt as chancellor), he went back to the FIPE and worked in the domain of tutor training, with one important focus

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[23] This analysis is based on the interviews with Heino Gröf (14.2.2008, 6.10.2008). Direct citations from the interview are marked with " ". I have known Heino Gröf before the interviews with him in the framework of some preparatory workshops for the PB process in Lichtenberg.
[24] See chapters 7 and 5 respectively.
[25] Wehner was head of the Social Democratic Party from 1969 to 1983, Brandt chancellor from 1969 to 1974.

being citizen participation. For example, he integrated the participatory process "planning cell"[26] in the teaching schedule and also supported its implementation – against vivid protests from within the FIPE:

> "The SPD-section of the FIPE battled against this [project], because they said – and later on it will be the same with regard to the participatory budgeting process [in Berlin] – that this is extra-parliamentary opposition.[27] The elected representatives and members of parliament take the decisions and not any citizens. The vision of democracy during these days was still very state authoritarian." [28]

In 1988, he drew the consequences of this opposition, left the FIPE and started to work freelance with an MP. Here, again, 'participation' was an important item, as he and his colleague tried to enhance the participation of simple members in big organisations (trade-unions, enterprises, municipalities). In 2000, he returned to the FIPE with the duty the reform the whole organisation – otherwise the Interior Ministry threatened to close it down. Whereas his superiors wanted to dismiss him shortly before he finished the reform programme, the newly elected President of the FIPE asked him to remain in order to accompany the new functioning and to establish new, thematic priorities of action. 'Participation' became one important element of action ("which finally was also politically supported in the directory" of the FIPE), and Gröf initiated and managed several projects related to civic engagement – such as the participatory budgeting process in Berlin Lichtenberg.[29]

Gröf's engagement for more citizen participation is based on a double diagnosis. First, he says that the current institutional system of representative democracy is not adapted to the complexity of current problems and issues (nuclear power, terrorism, etc.), because it does not allow for the greatest possible idea exchange, debate and solution generation. For him, it is necessary to widen the debates around these issues and to integrate citizens so that they can contribute with their enormous amount of "professional, thematic and social competences" – a variety of competences that a politician or civil servant, *per se*, cannot have. In addition, he

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[26] See chapter 2.

[27] The term „extra-parliamentary opposition" („Außerparlamentarische Opposition" or APO) is often equated with the student movement of 1968, and especially with the activities of the Socialist German Student Association.

[28] A couple of years ago, Gröf resigned from the membership of this party, criticising the lack of internal reform and the constant opposition he experienced against a more participatory style of governing.

[29] In the meanwhile, he has retired from the FIPE, but remains very active. He occupies a short-time teaching position in the city of Kassel and writes a Ph.D. thesis. It deals with political participation, but not as much with a developed theoretical perspective, but with the aim to change social reality through the development and set up of concrete "intervention projects".

criticises the fact that in the current system, the perspectives of citizens are constantly violated and by-passed, one of many examples being the re-organisation of referendums around the EU-constitution: "When people say 'no', the system is rearranged in a way that finally there will be a 'yes' – to continue like this will not be possible".

With regard to the legitimacy problems of representative democracy, Gröf finds it necessary to implement a "new vision of democracy in the heads and the hearts of people", one which is based on a more active role for ordinary citizens and a greater control and accountability of elected representatives. Participatory processes like PB, but also citizen juries or other devices, constitute a step in the right direction because they can generate "learning processes" amongst those who participate. Moreover, they "bring civil society in the boat of political decisions" and therefore, potentially, democratise decision-making processes – at least if large numbers participate.[30] Like the members of the 'working group', Gröf sustains the idea of a necessary co-decision making competence for citizens:

> "One should not simply listen to citizens, but they should participate in way that has an impact on decisions. They should be able to co-decide. Civil society is not any more as stupid as in the 1950s – if it has even been as stupid as members of the political elite think they are or have been."

The following table summarises Gröf's perspectives about citizen participation.

Table 11: Perspective on citizen participation by Heino Gröf

Developed by	Heino Gröf
Ideological foundation	- Post-authoritarian socialism
Diagnosis	- Representative democracy not adapted to complexity of current problems - Perspectives of citizens constantly violated and by-passed
Prognosis (in political sphere)	- Implementation of various participatory instruments - Strenghten the role of ordinary citizens in different social institutions
Goals	- Bring citizens "in the boat of political decisions" - Create "new vision of democracy" - Generate learning processes amongst citizens and policy-makers
Key features of participatory processes	- Co-decision of citizens - Accountability by politicians - Broad involvement; inclusion of not already organised citizens

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[30] Initially, Gröf pursued the aim of involving around a hundred thousand people to the participatory budget process in Berlin.

Together with Carsten Herzberg, a scholar of participatory democracy who developed the process model of participatory budget for a big city (BpB 2005), [31] Gröf worked towards the largest-possible integration of these principles to the participatory budgeting process in Berlin. He started by the introduction of a discussion 'platform' involving representatives of all political party foundations in Berlin. The 'working group' participated as civil society representative, but was excluded after several months.[32] It is probably a mix of organisational (Federal Institute for Education does not support single party projects), pragmatic (provide broad political support) and normative reasons (ensure an inclusive process), which motivated the introduction of the platform (January 2003). In this framework, numerous discussions, workshops and seminars took place, including German practitioners and academics working about participatory budgeting.

Initially, the members of the platform pursued the implementation of a PB trial process in the district of Berlin Mitte. When the district mayor retained his engagement, Lichtenberg came into the discussion. In the beginning, members of the platform rejected the proposition by Lichtenberg to start a PB process because of the political situation in the district (absolute majority of the 'Left' party). In the end, however, the overall management role of the Federal Institute for Political Education, as well as the support of the PB initiative by all parties in the Lichtenberg council, enabled the start of the first participatory budgeting process in a big German city (next to the Berlin district of Marzahn-Hellersdorf).[33]

4) Berlin Lichtenberg: the project of becoming a citizens' commune

In Lichtenberg, situated in the North-eastern part of Berlin, the 'Left' party has the highest number of adherents in the German capital. Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht are buried on a district cemetery. After the 2006 elections, the party lost the absolute majority of seats,

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[31] Herzberg, a 'green-alternative' political activist and scholar of participatory democracy, tried to promote the idea of participatory budgeting in Berlin already in 2000, but without success. He discovered the Porto Alegre model during the time of his graduation in political science at Potsdam University, at the end of a one-year research stay in Argentina (1999-2000) (Interview with Carsten Herzberg, 27.2.2007).

[32] Gröf suspected the two consultants of the group to steal ideas from the common discussion process in order to use them for private publications. The "Initiative for a participatory budget in Berlin" had not been included in the platform. Following to Gröf, they did not provide any interesting, concrete propositions. He might have also feared the 'intrusion' of an interest group to the platform. Following the perspective of other people, the positions of the 'Initiative' were too radical for the members of the platform.

[33] The process in Marzahn-Hellersdorf was not prepared with the same intensity and media coverage and did not involve a labelling in terms of the 'citizens' commune'. With regard to the similarities and differences between Lichtenberg and Marzahn see Brangsch, Brangsch 2006: 102-106; Herzberg 2008.

but is still the strongest party in the district council.[34] The district (ca. 258.000 inhabitants, 2005) has a quite heterogeneous urban structure, especially since the 2001 territorial reform that merged two former areas into the today district of Lichtenberg. It locates one of the largest areas of high-rise buildings ["*Plattenbau*"] in the former Eastern part of Germany. Yet, it also includes village-like and urban areas with a more traditional and old housing structure. A Vietnamese community lives in Lichtenberg and overall a bit more than 7,2% of the population have an immigrant background.

In the last years, the district has regularly been cited in the media because of violent, extreme right-wing activism; since 2006, the nationalist NPD party is represented in the district Parliament. Although there do exist certain 'problem districts', for instance in some areas with high-rise buildings, the overall living situation in Lichtenberg is quite good and lies in the Berlin medium (Bezirksamt Lichtenberg von Berlin 2006). This is the reason why the district has no areas that receive special funding from the 'Social City' programme. The neighbourhood management system, introduced in 2001, was therefore set up on a voluntary basis after the 2001 territorial reform. The aim was to bring the district administration closer to the citizens, to provide more possibilities for their direct involvement and thereby to strengthen the democratic culture. It is in this framework that the idea of a citizens' commune was mentioned for the first time in the district administration.[35]

After her election in 2002, Emmrich – herself a former local activist – initiated various participatory forums and so-called social-cultural centres run by local associations.[36] In 2004, this approach has been developed further with the adoption of a "Programme for community development" [*Gemeinwesenentwicklung*]. Like the 'Social City' project, but rather with a preventive focus, it aims at the "strengthening of the social cohesion of society in the district" and at the creation of "network activities" between local people (Bezirksamt Lichtenberg von Berlin 2005: 5). The proposition to implement a participatory budget process, put forward by members of the 'Left' party, therefore fit in the overall policy approach of the district mayor

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[34] During 2001-06, the post-communists hold 32 of 55 positions (nearly 52% of the votes), the Social Democrats 13, 8 the Christian democrats and 2 the Liberals. Since 2006, the situation is as follows: 24 seats are hold by the Left, 17 by the Social Democrats, 3 by the Green party, 3 by the Nationalist NPD party, 2 by the Liberal party, 1 by an alternative Left party.

[35] Interview with Johannes Middendorf (director of personal- and finance management in Lichtenberg), 13.12.2007.

[36] Their tasks are to coordinate volunteers and to organise cultural and social events in the neighbourhoods.

and was a means to confirm it – even more so as the participatory initiatives initiated so far had shown rather limited results (Tietze 2006: 63-65).

Since the beginning, the project of introducing a PB process was linked to the aim to elaborate a new normative model for Lichtenberg, the citizens' commune. The first official party document that specifies the idea of a citizens' commune shares more similarities with Banner's approach than with the one developed by Bogumil et al. (2003).[37] It contains the aim to strengthening the position and voice of citizens in municipal politics in order to fight against the "growing discontent with politics and parties". It states that "sustainable and irreversible steps in direction of the support and the strengthening of civic self-determination" lie in the heart of the development towards a citizens' commune.[38] Moreover, the document contains the goals of developing forms of direct democracy (e.g. municipal referendums) and of involving citizens in questions that concern their living conditions in the district (particularly programmes for young people). Finally, it emphasises the need to further strengthening the existing approaches and institutions of proximity management (district management, local one-stop offices of the administration, cooperation between district administration and local citizen initiatives and groups) in order to strengthen the citizen-oriented administration.

The official definition of the citizens' commune in Lichtenberg reflects the political orientation of the party at power, the 'Left' party and its overall democratisation agenda in Berlin (namely support for direct democracy). Moreover, it is strongly related to the district mayor, Christina Emmrich. Like Ségolène Royal in Poitou-Charentes, Emmrich's political will has been the decisive factor for introducing the frame of the citizens' commune in Lichtenberg, as well as to implement a participatory budget process. The following presentation concludes the panorama of 'PB actors' laid out in the last two chapters.

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[37] "Beschluss der Hauptversammlung des PDS Bezirksverbandes Lichtenberg", 22.11.2003.
[38] Ibid, p. 1.

Christina Emmrich, district mayor and supporter of the citizens' commune

Christina Emmrich was born 1948 in the city of Leipzig.[39] She has a professional degree in measurement engineering and studied social sciences. Between 1974 and 1986 she was responsible for women-related issues at the 'kreis' and district-level within the state party (SED), member of the organisation 'democratic women associaton' (*Demokratischer Frauenbund*) and between 1986 and 1990 secretary for women-related issues in the Presidency of the 'Free German trade-union association' (*Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund*). In GDR times, she did not use the term citizen participation, but the greater involvement of citizens, especially of women in the work place, was an important issue:

> „First of all I have to say very openly that we, that I didn't use this term citizen participation [*Bürgerpartizipation*] until '90. It probably...didn't belong to our language use. (...) In GDR times professional life (…) was extremely important and this is the reason why many things happened in the field of the work place. For me the co-involvement [*Mitsprache*] in defining the working conditions, of the organisation of work was very important. To consider women and their problems, for example with regard to shift work, which has always been a very important topic in the GDR: what kind of childcare do I have to organise when women want to or have to go to shift work."

Emmrich says that she was part of the system, believed in the ideas of Marxism and Socialism. This is the reason why, when the GDR broke down in 1989, she "broke down, too". One result of this fundamental political, societal and personal transformation process was that she did not go back to municipal politics on a full-time basis until 2001, although she continued political activism. She remained member of the SED-party ("it is not possible that all kind of socialist and Marxist ideas get condemned") and was deputy president of the party in Berlin between 1992-94. In 1995, she became 'district-MP' in Hohenschönhausen, 1999-2000 she chaired the parliament of Hohenschönhausen and in 2001-2002 she was elected deputy district mayor of Lichtenberg, before becoming mayor in 2002. During these years (after a period of unemployment after the regime breakdown), she was involved in several local voluntary projects and chaired a local association.

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[39] This presentation is based on the interviews with Christina Emmrich (9.4.2007; 6.12.2007) and the information of her website. Direct quotes are marked with " ".

For Emmrich, there is "nothing like a central theme" [*roter Faden*] in her life: the changes due to the unification process in Germany were too radical for maintaining such a common base line. She says that two particular experiences from the GDR have been relevant with regard to her engagement for participatory budgeting, one negative and one positive experience. The positive experience which remains is "to think in economic and complex terms", that is with regard to the "overall context" (for example the whole budget) and not only with regard to single aspects or areas as is the traditional model of bureaucracy. The second, negative one is the disregard of the individual:

> "Citizens [of the GDR] have made the experience that one can easily disregard the concerns of people if you don't involve them to the elaboration of their own projects; (...) that it is better to do something *with* people than *for* people. (...) And participatory budgeting is actually the counterpart of this, no? The approach is to involve people with regard to the creation of their working- and living conditions at a very early moment."

Emmrich's guiding principles with regard to the participation of citizens is the idea of "co-determination" [*Mitbestimmung*] of citizens in defining spending priorities (without transfer of direct decision-competences), as well as a "high degree of accountability" of policy makers with regard to these priorities. Moreover, the process should enable the broad involvement of ordinary, not already organised citizens, and remain flexible in order to adopt it to changing needs and conditions. The goals of these developments are to increase the involvement of citizens to the development of their living area and to "reach compromises" between different groups of the population, for instance older and young people. Moreover, it aims at an increased dialogue between citizens and policy-makers (the latter often think that they "know what people want"), as well as "new modes of thinking" amongst the citizenry and official representatives. In addition, Emmrich aims to stop the decrease in electoral participation.

Emmrich sees the participatory budgeting process like a "cherry on top" [*Pünktchen auf dem i*] with regard to the existing instruments of participation in the district. It would be the "most logical thing in the world" that people, who have the right to participate in many areas of the district policy, have the same right with regard to the finances, "the most important theme" in a municipality. She relates PB to the overall perspective of a citizens' commune:

> "Who thinks to be a citizens' commune needs to have a participatory budgeting process and who has a participatory budgeting process will, at a certain point, stand in need of saying: 'Now we have also become a bit a citizens' commune'. But this is a long process."

Such a citizens' commune includes necessarily a participatory budgeting process, but also other means of participation; it aims overall at a greater dialogue between citizens and policy-makers. Moreover, it "represents certain requirements to the administration", which will have to create more channels of dialogue to the service users. The opening of the traditionally closed circles of decision-making to citizens is, following to Emmrich, incompatible with a traditional conception of "parliamentarianism":

> "[Traditional] Parliamentarianism and participatory budget do not suit each other. (…). Parliamentarianism means that the elected representatives know everything and make all decisions. Because they know everything, they do not need to involve citizens. A participatory budget process follows a completely different path. It says that politicians need the knowledge and the experiences of people who live here. This is the reason why they should become involved."

Emmrich therefore pursues the inclusion of citizens' perspectives to the political system, but not a transfer of direct decision-making powers. Her perspective on citizen participation is summarised in the following table.

Table 12: 'Citizens' commune' frame by Christina Emmrich

'Citizens commune' frame	
Developed by	Christina Emmrich
Ideological foundation	- Post-authoritarian forms of Socialism and Marxism
Diagnosis	- Low levels of interests for political matters amongst citizens - Scepticism of policy-makers against perspectives of citizens
Prognosis (in political sphere)	- Implementation of participatory budgeting process - Introduction of other participatory instruments - More user-oriented administration
Goals	- Increased dialogue between policy-makers and citizens - Involve citizens to development of their living area; reach compromises - Stop decrease in electoral participation - New administrative and political "modes of thinking"
Key features of participatory processes	- Aiming at co-determination of choices by citizens - Accountability by politicians; flexible nature of process - Broad and open-access involvement; inclusion of not already organised citizens

Have the core principles of Parliamentarism (or of representative democracy) been modified, or not, by the introduction of the PB procedure in Berlin Lichtenberg? The next section seeks to provide an answer to this question.

II. A complex participation cycle about 'steerable' services

The basic structure of the participatory budgeting process was developed in the framework of a workshop with citizens, officers and politicians organised by the Federal Institute for Political Education in September 2004 and thereafter elaborated in a more systematic way by Carsten Herzberg (BpB 2005). This procedural framework was largely overtaken by the organisers of the Lichtenberg process (and thereafter developed further by them). This is the reason why, unlike in Poitou-Charentes, the process design is not the result of a small group of people putting to practice a frame of citizen participation, but emerged as part of a collective process involving a large number of people.[40]

On September 24th 2005, the first meeting of the participatory budgeting in Lichtenberg took place. Representatives of the district parliament signed a self-binding declaration about the non-partisan character of the procedure and their willingness to consider seriously the participants' proposals (Brangsch, Brangsch 2006: 70). A newspaper commented the event with the heading "Berlin becomes a citizen Republic", reflecting the high political expectations linked to this new procedure and to the absolute majority of the 'Left' party in the district (Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b: 182).

The Lichtenberg participatory budget functions as a cycle all over the year. It involves municipal services the district directly controls and delivers [*steuerbare Leistungen*],[41] and which add up to a sum of around 30 million euro (roughly six percent of the overall district

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[40] In Lichtenberg, the idea of introducing a PB process and the project of developing a new normative model of the public policy (citizens' commune), emerged quite simultaneously, but were not closely linked to each other. It is only over time that the link between both elements has developed and become more interrelated.

[41] All municipalities deliver 'steerable' [*steuerbare*] and 'non-steerable' services. The district executive can only influence the first type of services. In Lichtenberg, these are public libraries, the music school, an adult education centre, cultural services of all municipal culture institutions, support of health, support of children and young people, voluntary services for elderly people, support of physical education, maintenance of green spaces and play grounds, planning of green spaces, support of local economy (Bezirksamt Lichtenberg 2008).

budget of around 555 million euro, 2008).[42] This money is not an additional sum to spend, but represents the overall, 'steerable' (or 'controllable') budget of the district. This is the reason why participants are not simply encouraged to elaborate proposals that imply additional costs, but also to make propositions whereby the district can safe money, or which can be realised on a 'cost-neutral' basis. Since the year 2008 (PB process 2010), the field of competences for citizens has been enlarged and includes also planning construction investments in the district (involving four million euro in the years 2012 and 13 respectively) and neighbourhood projects provided by various voluntary associations [*freie Träger*] and churches, but financed by the district.

The PB process is based upon a quite complex structure that includes the following core steps. First, people living or working in Lichtenberg can put forward concrete project proposals: in written form, via internet, and at neighbourhood assemblies. Thereafter, participants put these projects into a priority order, which is then sent in form of a survey to a representative sample of the population. Subsequently, the different priority lists are submitted to the district council, who will decide upon which projects to retain and be accountable of this decision. Finally, the administration starts with the project implementation. It takes two years from the project proposition to its (possible) realisation, in other words: participatory budget meetings organised in 2008 concern the 2010 district budget. The whole process is monitored by a committee [*Begleitgremium*] that is supposed to evaluate the process throughout the year and to make proposals of modification and amelioration. It is composed of around 15 people, amongst them 7 'civil society' representatives and roughly 10 civil servants and politicians.[43] The process is transparent and flexible, as the organisers keep constantly developing it, try to learn from experience and gather external evaluations.[44]

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[42] In this sum, costs for personnel are included, so that the actual sum of money to be spent is much less. Roughly 14% of the overall budget is spent for personnel (2008).

[43] Initially, the members of such a committee were also dealing with the citizen proposals; for instance, they would merge several similar proposals into one. The modification of schemes, however, provoked much criticism from the part of participants, because they could not recognise their proposals any more. This is why this way of proceeding was not repeated (interview with Christina Emmrich, 6.12.2007).

[44] In the first year, this was done by the German Research Institute for Public Administration in Speyer and by the 'Frauenhofer Institut autonome intelligente Systeme', who developed the online platform. Also thereafter, the district has been cooperating with the Berlin University of Applied Science in order to allow students to carry out evaluation projects. Moreover, the organisers have organised several evaluative workshops since the beginning of the process.

Figure 6: Process of PB in Berlin Lichtenberg

Participatory Budget in Berlin Lichtenberg 2010

central assemblies
June, 21th, 2008

There are three ways for the citizens to make suggestions

13 district assemblies

WWW.buergerhaushalt-lichtenberg.de

Involvement by writing
(January–September 2008)

(June-Oct2008)
discussion forum with
subsequent
prioritisation up to 10
suggestions
(November 2008)

Suggestions are
forwarded to
Internet or to
district assemblies

Prioritisation of up
to 5 suggestions in
each district
assembly
(October 2008)

Bezirksamt Lichtenberg

Internet
1 list – Top 10

household survey with
two lists of suggestions
(December 2008)

district assemblies
13 lists – Top 5

The lits will be handed over to the boroughs central
assembly of representatives (BVV) (January 2009),

Source: Bezirksamt Lichtenberg von Berlin 2008b, p. 13.

The participation cycle officially starts in May-June with a public 'central citizen assembly' of around two hours organised in a public building.[45] It represents a 'kick off' meeting for the new round, as well as the final step of the previous one. All inhabitants are invited to attend and are welcomed by the district mayor. During the meeting, official representatives of the district executive and administration explain the core elements of the procedure and inform participants about the state of decision about and implementation of proposals put forward during the previous year(s) (including projects that have been integrated in the official decision-making process and those that have not).[46] Via a 'tracking number' that is assigned to every scheme, participants can also control the current state of decision about single proposals via the internet.

Starting from January on, the residents of Lichtenberg can already make proposals for concrete schemes: through a letter, or via internet. The written proposals are presented at the neighbourhood assemblies (September-October). Moreover, they are 'fed' into the internet discussion; the participants of the internet platform can also put forward own proposals. In November, the internet participants establish a priority list (the written and their 'own' proposals taken together) of 10 schemes. A second priority list is created at the decentralised meetings.

The decentralised meetings, organised in the 13 areas of the district, constitute a direct discussion platform amongst citizens, and between district policy makers and residents. Like the central kick-off meeting, they are well publicised in advance (internet, public institutions, flyers, etc.), child care is provided in the time of every public meeting and a sign language interpreter is present. In the beginning of the event, the moderators present the written proposals put forward so far and propose, on this basis, the formation of thematic working/discussion groups.[47] Participants are encouraged to put forward other topics, which might led to the formation of other discussion groups. During the group discussions following thereafter and usually moderated by a neighbourhood manager or member of the local social-cultural centre, participants are encouraged to develop proposals and to comment existing

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[45] The following description is based on the current process model, put down in the „Framework document for the participatory budget in Berlin Lichtenberg 2010" (Bezirksamt Lichtenberg von Berlin 2008a). I attended the meetings of the cycle 2007-08, when the process included still a final voting meeting.

[46] In the first year, the process started with a broad survey of the population initiated in July (cf. Weise 2007: 61sq.)

[47] The regulation document mentions the possibility to organise preparatory meetings with particular groups of the population. It states that in the case concrete proposals emerge from these meetings, their costs also need to be calculated by the administration and discussed at the 'official' district meeting.

ones. Back to the open assembly, each group moderator presents the proposals. The last part of the meeting (there is no general discussion about the proposals of the working groups) contains the selection of priorities by participants. All project proposals are written on a sheet of paper, which are fixed on several boards in the room. Every participant gets five points that he or she can freely distribute to the single projects.[48] The official framework document (Bezirksamt Lichtenberg 2008a: 12) is clear about the fact that this is not a voting process, but represents the "expression of opinion" through participants. In the end, all votes are counted and the results written down. Five projects with the highest score (a minimum amount of 25 points) pass to the next step.

During November-December, the five priorities of every district assembly, as well as the top-10 from the internet vote, are sent to 25,000 randomly selected households. The participants of this survey also establish their priorities through the distribution of five points. In January, all three priority lists are given to the district council (BVV). Between February and April, the Parliamentary committees (public meetings) deal with these proposals and decide which ones to integrate in the budget plan. During the 'central citizen assembly' of May-June, politicians are accountable about the status of citizens' proposals; in autumn the district council sets the budget plan for the next year. From January onwards, the district administration will start with the project implementation. Projects implemented so far have been, for example, the protection and maintenance of park benches, the care for and new plantation of trees along street borders, and the acquisition of Vietnamese books and DVDs in two public libraries. These are small-scale projects that reflect the priorities of participants.[49]

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[48] The distribution of five 'positive' (green points) and of five 'negative' (red points) votes practiced during one PB-cycle (meetings of 2007-08) was abandoned: it increased the possibility that participants try to support 'their' project through the devaluation of 'rival' proposals.

[49] It is not possible to estimate the number of projects that have been realised through the PB process. Many answers in the official accountability documents specify the activities carried out by the district administration in the domain at stake (libraries, parks, etc.), but not in how far this is related to, or even a result of, the participation procedure.

III. Limited powers for participants, but a user-oriented administration

Considering the results of the procedure so far, the political dimension appears by far weaker than the administrative one. Whereas the power of participants and their level of involvement remain limited, the process does constitute a quite powerful tool for creating a user-oriented administration. This is due, amongst others, to the strong support of Emmrich's initiative by two senior officers in the district administration. They were interested in the process, because it allows to introduce a new and better relationship between administrative officers and service users, as well as to create a more reactive and transparent administration.[50]

The question of power is, first of all, related to the question of the impact of citizens on the decisions taken through the participatory process. In Berlin Lichtenberg, participants define their priorities, but there is no general commitment to take them into account as in the 'High school participatory budget' process. The district Parliament remains the final referee who decides autonomously "*if*, and if yes *which*" projects of the participatory budget process should get funding (Bezirksamt Lichtenberg von Berlin 2009a: 1, emphasis added). In another document, it is clearly stated that "citizens *suggest* and *discuss* how the money should be used; politicians *decide* which suggestions will be included in the budget plan" (Bezirksamt Lichtenberg von Berlin 2008b: 11, emphasis added). The advantages of the process are described in terms of an "information gain" for citizens and elected representatives, of a "more efficient and effective use" of public resources that respect the "needs" of the population, and of a process that is based on a "public debate about needs and resources" and thereby enables a greater "transparency of budgetary decisions" (Bezirksamt Lichtenberg 2008a: 3-4).

One key for understanding this orientation is related to the fact that the PB process involves the whole investment budget the district is steering – and not a limited percentage of it (10% of the total amount in the French case). Unlike the organisers set up a Porto Alegre-style procedure with a sophisticated process (involving spending criteria, the election of citizens' delegates) and based on a broad public involvement, providing participants with decision-making competences about all 'steerable' services would be irresponsible and/or populist. In

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[50] Interviews with Johannes Middendorf, director of personal- and finance management in Lichtenberg, 13.12.2007; Ernst-Ullrich Reich, Director of Steering service in Lichtenberg, 12.12.2007.

any case, such a far-reaching process would probably have never reached a political majority in Lichtenberg (also within the 'Left' party).

At the same time, the current system restricts almost all powers of decision and steering in the hands of the official organisers. They judge for instance of the feasibility and legitimacy of a proposed project. They decide whether a proposed scheme fits the political priorities of the district or not. In the accountability document for the 2010 process (published on the internet), one can read for example the answer of three local councillors to the request made on the internet platform. They answer the proposal to invest more money in the 'Public order office' [*Ordnungsamt*] by saying:

> "The existing human resources are determined by the *Senate* [Berlin government]. More personnel can only be taken on at the expense of other areas of the district administration. This is and was no political priority."[51]

Similar examples of the simple rejection of a proposal can be found in this and other official documents that the district yearly publishes in order to provide accountability of the process. In another report, for example, the proposition to broaden the existing social committees [*Sozialkommissionen*] of the districts is refused with the argument of lacking finances.[52] These examples show that citizens have no impact on the definition of the policy priorities of the district; they can simply make propositions that representatives can chose, or not, to integrate into the budget plan; thereafter they need to be accountable with regard to their choices. The role of politicians as 'final referees' is even greater when priorities via internet, district assemblies, and survey diverge, because they then need to decide which perspective they want to follow or not.[53] In the case of overlapping priorities expressed in all three channels, however, it probably increases the pressure on council members to consider them.

The pressure on policy makers to consider the citizens' proposals would also be greater if proposals were developed in more detail. So far, most proposals that are put forward in the internet or the neighbourhood assemblies have the form of 1-3 line requests and do not contain a further justification of their specific 'need'. From this perspective, it is quite

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[51] Bezirksamt Lichtenberg, Anlage 3 zur BA-Vorlage 028/09, p. 2.
[52] Bezirksamt Lichtenberg, Umsetzungsbericht Bürgerhaushalt 2008, p.8, www.buergerhaushalt-lichtenberg.de.
[53] Since the 2010 process, only two priorities lists exist: one with the priorities of the neighbourhood assemblies and the survey; the other with the results from the internet and the survey.

understandable that policy makers want to keep their overall steering- and decision competence with regard to quite 'randomly' put forward proposals by citizens – and which can also represent a certain parochial spirit. Whereas the Lichtenberg process model was supposed to include more moments of common deliberation than other German PB processes, this aspect is not yet working very well. With regard to the internet forum, there does not seem to be real, moderated exchange of arguments and ideas, but comments and proposals are very diverse and not necessarily related to each other (Herzberg 2008: 162). As to the neighbourhood assemblies I attended[54], participants often did not exactly know what they were supposed to do or talk about. The moderator did not always try to 'make people talk', nor did he or she put forward criteria that could guide the discussion. The saving aspect of the process was sometimes completely disregarded by the moderators so that, in the end, it took the form of 'what I always thought we needed in our neighbourhood' instead of confronting diverse projects with regard to the overall needs and problems in the local area or the overall district. The fact that there is no common discussion about all projects elaborated in the small groups underpins this aspect even more.[55]

With regard to the 'rules of the game', another aspect that touches the question of citizen power, it is true that the participation model of Lichtenberg was for the first time in Germany elaborated with a broad range of people, amongst them also interested citizens. Yet, it is the administration who, together with the district executive, has since then determined the process rules. A small group of organised citizens can put forward proposals and suggestions of change in the framework of the evaluating committee, but they have no decisive influence on the definition of rules. Moreover, the district administration prepares and organises the neighbourhood meetings, even though there is a growing implication of the local socio-cultural centres. The kick-off/accountability meeting of May-June is entirely organised by the district administration. This is the reason why for Lutz Brangsch, who had been involved in the importation of PB to Berlin since the very beginning (above), the "spirit" of the Bertelsmann foundation is much more present than that of the city of Porto Alegre:

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[54] The basis of observation is limited and concerns three district assembly meetings and the ‚final voting' meeting (which does not exist any more) in December 2007. These observations should therefore be counter-checked in other places. Nonetheless, many other people I talked to in Lichtenberg shared this overall perspective.
[55] A further problem is the fact that the official moderator of each sub groups presents the proposals elaborated in the group. This engenders the danger that some of the propositions 'fall under the table' or are put down slightly differently than the original idea – and that those who made the initial proposal might not dare to correct the moderator in front of the whole assembly. I observed such a situation in two assemblies.

"The spirit of Bertelsmann [is] much more present than Porto Alegre. I mean, the people from Lichtenberg [the official organisers] do not really have the confidence that citizens are able to manage the process themselves, and that it does not need to be accompanied by a decision of the district council." [56]

There are attempts in Lichtenberg to create stronger roots of the process in the civil society. The new framework document for the 2010 participatory budget process, for instance, underlines the need to "integrate existing local structures", namely socio-cultural centres, churches, schools and the like (Bezirksamt Lichtenberg von Berlin 2008a: 6).[57] With this reorientation, the Lichtenberg process becomes more similar to the participatory budgeting process in Marzahn-Hellersdorf, the neighbouring district. The organisers in Marzahn pursued since the beginning a more micro-local approach with meetings in local neighbourhoods and the implication of socio-cultural centres (Herzberg 2008: 160-61).[58]   In Lichtenberg, this reorientation witnesses the further development of the idea of citizens' commune. The latest framework document deals for the first time with the processes of participatory budgeting and of community development [*Gemeinwesenentwicklung*] under the same heading and links both elements to the goal of becoming a citizens' commune (ibid). The organisers aim at an increase in the citizen participation through the greater foundation of the PB process in the neighbourhoods.

So far, the Lichtenberg procedure has not yet provoked a great mobilisation of inhabitants, although the numbers have been increasing over the last years. All in all, 4.661 people participated through diverse means in 2008: 1.631 in district assemblies/the 'kick-off' event; 1.751 via internet; and 1.289 through the survey.[59] Compared to other experiences with participatory budgeting in Germany, the participation in Lichtenberg does not involve much

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[56] Interview with Petra and Lutz Brangsch, 5.1.2008.

[57] The first framework document of 2005 does not refer to the particular role of „local structues". It needs to be seen in how far they will be concretely associated to the preparation and organisation of future participatory budget events in Lichtenberg.

[58] Moreover, participants in Marzahn-Hellersdorf managed to reorient the process in direction of their own conceptions, because the official organisers in the district had no clear ideas about how to organise the participatory budgeting procedure. Instead of evaluating district services they imposed a process for deciding about micro-local funds (Herzberg 2008: 160-61).

[59] Drucksache der Bezirksverordnetenversammlung Lichtenberg von Berlin, DS/1201/VI, 26.2.2009, p. 1. In 2004, 595 people came to the district assemblies, in the year 2005 502. Similarly, the number of internet users increased over the last years: from 485 registered participants (279 with voting rights) in 2004 to 2.438 registered participants (1.751 with voting rights) in 2008. In 2008, 5,2% of potential survey participants sent the survey back. With regard to internet users and the overall quantity of participants, it is difficult to determine the exact percentage, because not only Lichtenberg residents can participate, but also people who work in the district.

more people, but attracts more young people and more representatives of minority groups (Herzberg 2008: 163). In order to 'boost' the participation – the most direct sign of the 'success' of the procedure – the organisers are increasingly considering the use of specific measures. Since 2008, 10% of the inhabitants of a neighbourhood (randomly selected) are personally invited to attend a neighbourhood meeting with an invitation letter signed by the mayor. Furthermore, the administration organised over 60 preparatory meetings to the neighbourhood assemblies (partly with particular groups of the population). This provoked a clear augmentation of participation numbers in the neighbourhood assemblies: from 786 in 2007 (0,3% of population) to 1.491 in 2008 (0,5%). As shown above, there is a growing tendency to link the participatory budget approach with the concept of community development introduced in 2004. This is also the reason why the number of neighbourhood assemblies was augmented (from initially five to 13).

Whereas the political results of the Lichtenberg PB procedure are ambivalent, the procedure represents quite well the second dimension of the citizens' commune: the development of a user-oriented administration. The answers given at the kick-off/accountability meetings, as well as in the written document, provide citizens with information related to their requests and therefore increase the transparency of the district administration. In cases where not the district administration, but another institution (e.g. the Senate) is responsible, the officers will forward the requests to the respective institutions, which might also create more transversal ties between district and city administration. The website contains a broad information and documentation of the process (number of participants, of schemes, 'tracking numbers' for every proposal, etc.) and of the past and present process regulations and decisions by the district council.

Overall, the procedure has led to a greater dialogue between citizens, officers and politicians. It constitutes a platform of idea and information exchange between civil society and the political and administrative spheres. It has led to a remarkable transparency of and information about the district investments and its overall budget, which is 'broken down' to the neighbourhood level and specified in terms of the cost of every single 'product'. Whereas citizens can learn through the process the possibilities and constraints of public spending, policy makers get information about the needs of the population. As in the Poitou-Charentes case, the Lichtenberg procedure provides the administration with new information. With regard to libraries, for example, a senior officer in the administration explains that through the

participatory budget process it is possible to know what kind of different priorities exist in different parts of the district:

> "We have (…) highly populated areas; young and old people live there together. Than we have areas with an old urban structure, where mostly elderly people live. Then we have areas where new people are moving to, families with small children. Now we discover what kind of medium is requested in what area. We didn't know that before. Before, we put a bit of everything everywhere; now we know that in highly populated areas we need to distribute much more modern media like DVDs and the like. In those areas with an old urban structure and old population, (…) there are hardly any requests for DVDs. [Through the PB process] we found out that, before, we partly planned without considering the needs of the population in different urban areas." [60]

As in the 'High school participatory budget', the process itself does not permit a discussion about district-wide priorities. At the same time, it enables politicians (and the administration), if they are willing to do so, to re-consider their hitherto priorities.[61] Moreover, the participatory budgeting process has ameliorated the 'standing' of the administration in society, in that it clarified the role and possibilities of action of the administration and its relation to service users.[62] The head of the finance service underlines that the process constitutes an "enrichment" of his work – even though the complete reorganisation of the budgetary process and the integration of peoples' opinions before the budgetary plan is set up, do also represent an enormous workload.[63] Like in Poitou-Charentes, the whole process could have not been implemented on a stable basis without the strong commitment of single leading officers within the administration, as well as with a strong political will from the part of the mayor.

Conclusion

Like in Poitou-Charentes, the set up of the participatory budget process in Lichtenberg followed initially mainly political goals (although it was since the outset linked to administrative goals, too), formulated in the framework of the citizens' commune project: the

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[60] Interview with Ernst-Ullrich Reich, director of the steering department in Lichtenberg, 12.12.2007.
[61] Following the same officer, the participation process also revealed the importance of bicycle lines in the population instead of automatically investing everything to the renewal and extension of streets.
[62] Idem.
[63] Interview with Johannes Middendorf, director of personal- and finance department in Lichtenberg, 13.12.2007.

greater involvement of citizens in the budget making process and the fight against political discontent. Retrospectively, Emmrich also establishes a clear link to the Porto Alegre case, brought on the political agenda by civil society activists: "We did not only want to learn from Porto Alegre. We also wanted to realise the [participatory budget] project under this premise" (Emmrich 2006: 7).[64] The procedure of Lichtenberg differs indeed from previous German examples in that it emphasises the need for a broad mobilisation of citizens, for more discussion possibilities and the definition of priorities by participants themselves,[65] as well as for a serious process of accountability through elected representatives. Moreover, the process has been the first case in Germany where members of the civil society were involved in the initial procedural designing of the process.

At the same time, however, I showed that also the more 'participationist' definition of the citizens' commune remains fully in the framework of representative democracy. Elected representatives continue to be the final referees who evaluate the legitimacy and feasibility of citizen proposals and, autonomously, take the final decisions. Despite the rhetoric reference to the Porto Alegre model, the official documents or individual perspectives of the official organisers have never included the idea of a real 'power division' or the transfer of decision-making competences to citizens. The procedure, too, remains within the framework of representative democracy; it includes a broader participation, more discussions between participants, and a definition of priorities through participants themselves, but not a high degree of procedural autonomy and power of participants. It goes beyond the strongly top-down model of the Bertelsmann foundation that sees participatory budgeting simply as an "information tool for the council";[66] but it does not modify the separation of power between elected representatives and citizens: the former discuss whereas the latter decide.

With regard to the procedural models of PB, Lichtenberg is situated between the 'consulation on public finances' (consultative process, limited influence of participants on the 'rules of the game') and the 'Porto Alegre adapted for Europe'- process (ranking of projects; a participation cycle; a broad range of topics) – although it is much closer to the former than the latter. With regard to the criteria of innovation developed here, the process shows an

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[64] Following two leading civil servants in the administration, however, the Porto Alegre model did not play an important role in for the process implementation and development.
[65] Following Herzberg, it is mainly due to Gröf's influence that citizens can establish their priorities in the Lichtenberg PB process (Herzberg 2008).
[66] See chapter 3.

ambivalent picture: it does not provide citizens with direct decision-making competences, but the organisers use different measures for increasing the involvement of citizens (especially young people and immigrants) and have enlarged the scope of influence of citizens over the last years. The 2011-process (meetings taking place during 2009) includes also construction investments in the district and neighbourhood projects provided by various voluntary associations and churches. In addition, the proposition of introducing a 'neighbourhood fund' of 5,000 euro per neighbourhood (proposition put forward by participants of previous years) has been introduced, which allows citizens to get funding for small-scale projects decided by a citizen jury (Bezirksamt Lichtenberg von Berlin 2009b).

Like in the previous two chapters, the following table summarises the single aspects linked to the degree of innovation of the process.

Table 13: Degree of political/procedural innovation of the Lichtenberg PB process

Degree of political/procedural Innovation	Impact on rules and management	Decision-making	Level of participation	Measures for increasing participation	Scope of influence
PB in Lichtenberg	Medium: role in the invention; steering role	No	City-wide and in neighbourhoods	Considerable	Medium: growing number of domains

Instead of being a far-reaching procedure in political terms, the participatory budget process is part of a user-oriented administration. Moreover, it has further strengthened this user focus by creating more direct channels of communication between the population and the district administration and by making the budget allocation process more transparent and more reactive towards the perspectives of ordinary citizens. Moreover, I put forward the hypothesis that the citizens' commune is on the way to become the *référentiel* of the district administration. The PB process has been a means to foster this development, which had started already before with the set up of participatory structures (e.g. socio-cultural centers) and more administrative transparency. Through the PB process, the domain of citizen participation has been considerably enlarged, in that it includes now issues related to the district budget and more recently also construction investments and voluntary projects. In addition, it seems that more and more administrative officers are supporting the initiative. Following to two leading officers, who since the very beginning have co-implemented and

developed the process in the administration, the level of support within the administration has risen over the years. Following to their perception, between 30 and 50% of administrative personnel sustained the process at the end of 2007, whereas in the beginning at maximum 10% were favourable of it.[67] I have no direct information about how big the number of administrative officers is, whose professional identity really changed due to the PB process (one element for defining the existence of a *référentiel*). From the observation during the PB meetings, however, as well as from the interviews conducted, it seems that there exists a certain (increasing) number of officers who support this initiative and the user-oriented and participatory focus of the administration, which has supplanted a more traditional bureaucratic approach. More concretely, I would talk of a 'participatory user-administration' in Berlin Lichtenberg. The emphasis and support of a broad involvement of different (disadvantaged) groups of the population, as well as a cautious enlargement of the role of local initiatives in the process organisation (management of meetings), witness a spirit that goes beyond a mere administrative concern of involving the respective service users. For the organisers, moreover, the symbolic pressure is high to show that 'their' participatory undertaking also shows some results and is supported by the population; otherwise it would be difficult to justify the administrative efforts and the money spent for organising this new participatory space.

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The last three chapters have provided a detailed account of the implementation of three participatory budget processes: the 'High school participatory budget' in Poitou-Charentes as well as the procedures in Berlin Lichtenberg and Salford. They introduced different local contexts, different types of involved actors and diverging dynamics of the process implementation. The French and German case have been introduced as part of a new political programme, largely advertised and communicated through a new frame of citizen participation (participatory democracy, citizens' commune). In Salford, by contrast, the process was introduced at the margins of the political system and without being supported by a strong political will or a new frame. In Poitou-Charentes, participatory budgeting was 'imported' through a direct diffusion process (Royal and Bouchet-Petersen both travelled to

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[67] Interviews with Ernst-Ullrich Reich, Director of Steering service in Lichtenberg (12.12.2007), and with Johannes Middendorf, Director of Personnel- and Finance service in Lichtenberg (13.12.2007).

Porto Alegre), whereas the idea of implementing such a procedure in Berlin and Salford was introduced to the political agenda by civil society activists (mediated diffusion). In Berlin, the activists were successful. In Salford it took several years before a process was set up, which however has not much in common with the initial plans. It shows the most limited degree of procedural and political innovation. In Berlin and Poitou-Charentes, the situation is more ambivalent. The procedures have some innovative dimensions (transfer of decision-competences in France; use of innovative participation measures and enlarged scope of influence in Berlin), but others remain clearly in the array of traditional participatory instruments (consultative, micro-level, no impact on rules). In the now following, general conclusion, this attempt to provide a more systematic account of the three cases presented will be continued and enlarged. I pick up all of the initial questions formulated in the introduction and provide an overall, comparative analysis and summary. What are the main results of this study about frames of citizen participation and participatory budget institutions?

General Conclusion

Frames of citizen participation – frames of democracy? Comparative perspectives

The preceding chapters have examined the diffusion and introduction of participatory budget institutions in France, Germany, and Great Britain. I have provided an overview about the implementation and functioning of participatory budgeting in the respective national contexts; moreover, I carried out three in-depth studies dealing with the processes of adaptation of PB to three different settings. Central questions of the research concerned the relation between frames of citizen participation and the process of participatory budgeting, the degree of innovation of the three cases and the similarities and differences of current frames of citizen participation in Germany, France, and Great Britain. What are the empirical and conceptual conclusions that can be drawn after this long *parcours* through different national settings and local processes? What do the different 'stories' about participatory budget institutions and frames of citizen participation tell us with regard to more general trends and developments of the democratic order in Western societies?

I shall start this comparative summary by an assessment of the conceptual framework. Thereafter, I deal with the question of the emergence, diffusion, the similarities and differences between frames of citizen participation. The third part reconsiders the three processes of participatory budgeting. The first section summarises the empirical findings with regard to the intervening factors and dynamics of the invention and implementation of a participatory budget institution. Thereafter, I approach the three cases of PB from the perspective of institutional change. This question does not belong to the core set of questions presented in the introduction, but it adds further insights with regard to the results of PB on the institutional structure, a question touched upon with the concept of *référentiel*. Finally, I investigate the degree of innovation of the three procedures and relate this analysis back to the question of the different frames of citizen participation.

I. Frames and *référentiel*s – useful concepts for analysing the role of ideas

The concepts of frame and *référentiel* allowed for the organisation and analysis of the broad amount of empirical data accumulated over the last years through interviews, observations and the collection of policy documents. They constituted a good conceptual framework for investigating existing normative concepts of citizen participation, their role in the implementation and diffusion of participatory budget institutions, as well as the outcomes of these processes in relation to the institutional settings. I was able to use them at the macro level, i.e. the developments and tendencies at the national level (frames, 'master frames' and *référentiels* in France, Germany, and the UK), as well as at the local level, with regard to the presentation of individual perspectives and the processes of procedural design and/or implementation.

I showed that frames in the form of official policy goals play a variable role in the implementation of new institutions, depending on political will, broader administrative support and the possibilities of action of the team that introduces a new process (competences, funding, etc.). However, frames are never simply 'put into practice'; they are adapted to the respective institutional setting and interpreted or re-interpreted following to contextual features and changing political interests of the organising actors. The resulting process usually constitutes a compromise of different perspectives, although it then develops its own pace of development (below).

Both concepts, frames and *référentiels*, link the existence of certain ideas and idea combinations to the actors, who develop new ideas or put a new term or concept on the political agenda. The research has underlined the central role of individual or collective 'idea brokers' who import 'foreign' ideas and processes to their own (or another new host) culture and contribute to its diffusion. They participate in the broad movement of 'idea production', which involves not only social scientists, but also political leaders, ordinary people, and administrative officers. The notion of frame, particularly, does not restrict the analysis on official documents or statements, but allows for the investigation of the goals and positions of all these kinds of actors. Although the present research contains many frames of 'leading' actors (mainly politicians and academics), because I was interested in understanding the goals

that oriented the implementation of a PB process or to get insights into nationally widespread ideas, frames are not restricted to these 'thinking heads'.

I analysed different definitions of the same frame-label, for example the participatory democracy frame by Bouchet-Petersen in Poitou-Charentes and that of three Brazilian authors (and activists). The differences between both perspectives reflect diverging political and ideological orientations and backgrounds. Moreover, the frame perspective allows the researcher to highlight the (in-)consistencies of a position or discourse. Whereas Ségolène Royal, for instance, does not have a distinct frame of participatory democracy, as the changing discourse during the Presidential campaign and the use of different types of participatory instruments show, the frame of her special advisor Bouchet-Petersen is much clearer and reflected, at least partly, by her political choices.

I used the concept of *référentiel* in a rather descriptive way in order to analyse current national trends and the outcomes of PB procedures. In analysing the content of terms like citizens commune or proximity, I found it more useful to develop the operationalisation provided in parts of the public policy and social movement literature, rather than working with the four dimensions identified in the literature about *référentiels*.[1] However, this approach was useful in order to focus on the power position and influence of the actors that put a new concept on the political agenda and to analyse the links between PB processes and the institutional framework (influence on professional identities, organisational structure). A full-blown analysis of *référentiels* would have required a more detailed research on the professional identities and organisational changes, as well as on the process of transformation (and the criteria in this regard) from a frame of citizen participation to a *référentiel*. When exactly is it possible to talk of a *référentiel*? How many people must share a certain perspective in order to be able to identify a *référentiel* within, for instance, an administrative department? Is it still possible that single actors can combine different (for instance old and new) normative references with each other?

Another aspect that remained underdeveloped in the conceptual framework is the case in which actors do not use a clear overall label for describing their perspectives about citizen participation. This was the case with one German interview partner. The summary table of

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[1] Values, norms, algorithms, and images (see chapter 1).

this interview does not contain a frame label, because the actor themself did not present his perspective about citizen participation in relation to such an overall term. I did not want to impose an external (i.e. my own) label in order to identify the "objective sense" (Zittoun 2008: 84) of what people told me. Zittoun, by drawing on the work of Bruno Latour, has underlined the "fundamental difference" (ibid) that exists between research that focuses on the discourses and 'meaning work' of actors in order to analyse public policies, and an approach that proposes an external classification of the arguments and discourses of involved actors. The position I adopted could represent an intermediate position, but would need a more detailed theoretical and methodological reflection. I argued in the text that these perspectives contain some of the ideas that have been mentioned in the framework of other frames of citizen participation. It means that I used these frames as sort of idea blueprints or ideal types for the analysis of other discourses. This proceeding, however, comes into conflict with the idea of frames as flexible entities that change their meaning over time. Generally speaking, one could ask if it would be necessary to distinguish more clearly between frames as public concepts (i.e. notions debated in the public sphere) and frames as individual perspectives. Should these different levels or 'manifestations' of a frame be investigated with different methods? These questions invite further empirical and theoretical investigation.

The analysis of participatory budget institutions and normative perspectives about citizen participation with the concepts of frame and *référentiel* have hopefully, however, produced interesting insights for other scholars working with these concepts. Most notably, this combination allows the researcher to focus on different processes (the invention, diffusion and re-interpretation of concepts like community or the citizens' commune; the development of a simple policy label to a more widely-shared principle of public policy) and the related intervening factors, for instance agency, power and aspects of the political context. For future research, it will be important to determine more clearly the respective importance and relation between these different intervening factors.

II. Frames of citizen participation: emergence, diffusion, similarities and differences

Frames (of citizen participation) either summarise and express ideas or concepts that are 'floating' more or less explicitly in the public sphere, or they are actively imported from a different context and therefore introduce new ideas to an existing one. The Porto Alegre participatory democracy frame,[2] for instance, represents a novel approach in all Western representative democracies. In France, it marks a difference with regard to the Republican legacy, particularly with regard to the State-civil society relationship, which is traditionally characterised by the idea of distance. It also differs from the idea of proximity that restricts the involvement of citizens to the micro-local level. Also in Germany and the UK, the idea of participatory democracy as developed in Porto Alegre challenges existing democratic traditions. In Germany, institutionalised local citizen participation has a longer tradition than in centralist France. Here like there, however, citizen participation is in most cases[3] thought of in terms of merely consultative devices, which by no means challenge the division of labour between elected representatives and citizens. In the UK, too, elected reppr, too, elected reprententatives are considered those who detain the ultimate decision-making powers. National government has developed in recent years a 'participation agenda'. This includes the devolution of specific tasks to citizens, but does not modify the overall steering role of the local and national power centres, and especially of Parliament, the 'mother' of all institutions.

Whereas the concept of participatory democracy brings new ideas to most Western democracies, other frames of citizen participation articulate certain features or trends of the existing national political context. Raffararin's proximity frame, for instance, represents the modification of the traditional French Republican model, which has started to be contested since the 1960s (institutional modifications were introduced since the 1980s. His model underlines the need for a greater dialogue between politicians, civil servants and citizens and for the reduction of the highly centralist state organisation. The citizens' commune, in turn, represents the double development that took place in Germany during the 1990s (next to many other processes): an increasing economisation on the one hand (introduction of the New

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[2] In order to avoid misunderstandings I repeat that the designation of 'Porto Alegre' frame is a simplification, because it is only related to a specific perspective developed in chapter 4 and does not contain other, alternative definitions.

[3] An exception is the transfer of assets, which, however, often follows a pure economic logic of saving costs.

Public Management reform agenda), and a trend towards more participation (spread of various participatory instruments). These developments show that frames are related to the context within which they emerge and diffuse, although they are not determined by it, can cross the national borders and be invested with new meanings.

This is why these frames are not fixed entities and change their meaning over time – as well as the context does. From this perspective, frames are part of what Quentin Skinner has called the "changing political languages in which societies talk to themselves" (Skinner 1998: 105). Both dimensions, frames and context, are inter-related in a dynamic process, because a changed context does provoke the emergence of new ideas, such as new ideas can contribute to the modification of the existing context. The precise mechanisms and the historical dimension of this relation have not been studied in the previous chapters, because the research focus was a different one; but it could be a fruitful empirical and theoretical research project to link this analysis about frames to Skinner's research programme to put political 'ideas in context'.

Frames become dominant through the diffusion of networks and their use by a certain number of local policy makers or civil society actors (citizens' commune), or by the active use and support of powerful policy actors or 'policy entrepreneurs' (proximity and participatory democracy in France). The community frame is an example of the latter case (promotion by prominent politicians of New Labour), although it already belonged to the existing vocabulary in the UK. The fact that Tony Blair (or Hazel Blears) discovered the virtues of community probably supported the spread and use of this term, but he did not create a new concept. Usually, the more a concept becomes widespread, the more definitions exist. As soon as a new frame becomes part of the 'normal' political vocabulary, it will lose any specific content and be defined in diverging ways. This is related to the fact that every frame diffusion involves a re-interpretation of the concept in relation to the perceptions, goals or political strategies of the involved diffusion actor.

Each frame is based on a specific, context related prognosis, although all positions considered here share an overall criticism with regard to the 'pure' model of representative democracy that does not include any form of citizen participation beyond regular elections (see table below). In all perspectives, citizen participation is seen as one possible means that, amongst others, will contribute to an amelioration of the current state of affair and the 'crisis' of

democracy. The ideological roots of these perspectives differ, as they range from socialist ideas to communitarian perspectives and the New Public Management agenda.

Every frame consists of a specific idea combination, for instance the close combination, and mutual reinforcement, of participation and administrative reform (all variants of the citizens' commune); the devolution of power to local citizens and communities (Blears' community frame); the empowerment and 'capacity building' of poor citizens through participation in local groups and participatory processes (Hall's community development/empowerment frame); participation in terms of top-down consultative devices (Raffarin's proximity frame); and the perspective on direct citizen participation as second, equally legitimate basis of democracy (Porto Alegre participatory democracy frame).

At the same time, these different models also partly overlap with each other. The community frame of Hazel Blears, for instance, shares with the participatory democracy frame of Porto Alegre the emphasis on power transfer. In contrast to the 'Brazilian' frame, however, Blears restricts the domain of public involvement to particular, clearly defined issues. This is the reason why she does not envision the control of *society* over the *state*, but a "community control over services" (Blears 2003). Moreover, Blears does not envision a strong degree of self-regulation of participatory processes through the participants, nor does she pursue a radical social agenda ('community cohesion' instead of 'inversion of priorities').

The communitarian roots and emphasis of the micro-local level of action are similar in Blears' and Jez Hall's frames, although the latter emphasises more clearly the need to involve poor people or communities. Moreover, he underlines the importance of common discussion and learning processes amongst citizens in order to increase their 'social capital' and, ideally, aims at a new division of power amongst citizens and policy-makers. Both community frames share the level of participation with the proximity frame by Raffarin: the micro-local level. The strong emphasis Hazel Blears puts on the devolution of power, however, and Hall's focus on the empowerment of people through common learning and 'capacity-building' processes, constitute important differences with regard to the 'French' perspective.

The idea of establishing consultative devices of citizen participation constitutes a common goal of the proximity frame and the concept of citizens' commune developed by Bogumil et al. (2003). Moreover, these two perspectives have a consensual focus on citizen participation

and do not aim to modify the existing division of power between elected representatives and citizens. A difference between them lies in the importance of administrative reform for all authors of the citizens' commune, whereas Raffarin pays much less attention to this aspect and focuses more on the set up of organisations and structures of 'human size'.

The two frames of participatory democracy dealt with in this study, the Porto Alegre approach and the position of Bouchet-Petersen in France, share some common features: the importance of a transfer of power, the organisation of participatory processes that have a real 'stake' for participants and the involvement of people from lower social strata. At the same time, they differ in relation to the social dimension, because the 'French' perspective does not involve a strong social agenda ('inversion of priorities') like in Brazil. Moreover, it places much less importance on the self-regulation of participants in the idea of 'citizen control' over the administrative-political structure.

The following table summarises these elements, as it brings together most of the single models presented in the empirical chapters.

Table 14: Overview frames of citizen participation

	Participatory democracy		Proximity	Community / Community development-empowerment		Citizens' commune	
Formu-lated by	Tarso Genro (1998, 2001) , Ubiratan de Souza (1998), Raol Pont (2000)	Sophie Bouchet-Petersen (interview)	Jean-Pierre Raffarin (2002)	Hazel Blears (2003)	Jez Hall (interview)	Gerhard Banner (1999)	Jörg Bogumil, Lars Holtkamp, Gudrun Schwarz (2003)
Ideology	Post-authoritarian forms of Socialism,	An overall, post-authoritarian left wing orientation	- Liberalism (individual liberty, but also duties) - Values of friendship, love, conviviality, generosity; - Republican state ideology	Guild Socialism, communitarianism	Social capital, communitarianism, participatory democracy	- User-oriented forms of New Public Management - Idea(l) of local self-government (municipalities with high autonomy and vivid local democracy)	- User-oriented forms of New Public Management - 'Cooperative democracy'
Diag-nosis	- Structural distance between elected representatives and citizens - Dominance of wealthy classes - Dominance of neo-liberal thinking and actions - Corruption and weakness of Brazilian state - Failure of revolutionary experiences so far	-Widespread disinterest for public issues - Poor quality of existing participatory instruments (without a "stake", limited and only middle-class participation)	- Lack of proximity in political system - "Monoculture" of political class - Inefficient public administration - Crisis of state role - Overall "sclerosis" of political system	- Unwillingness of "experts" to give up parts of their power - prevalence of paternalistic approach - Socialist models of state ownership do not work today - Poor services in deprived areas - Low voting turnouts - distrust in authorities	- Institutional resistence to change - Low levels of engagement, high degree of cynism about political system - Poor people have no voice in decision-making and service delivery	- cities rules by "political-administrative complex" which rejects idea and practice of civic engagement - high practical limits to municipal referendums - Municipal budget not part of participatory instruments	- Financial crisis of local authorities - Steering crisis - Crisis of societal institutions - Legitimacy crisis of democracy
Prog-nosis	- Create new, democratic public sphere where citizens participate directly - Social control of	-Give people a 'stake' in political process, i.e. through participatory instruments	- Decentralisation, more networks and partnerships - More citizen participation - Support of	- More citizen engagement in realm of local public services (participatory budgeting)	- Create participatory instruments like participatory budgeting - Engage learning	- combination of representative democracy, direct democracy (referendums) and consultative means	- Implementation of consultative participation processes; transfer of assets to citizens - Set up of

245

	the state - Transform the state: two centres of power (vote, direct participation of citizens)		"structures of human size" (family, associations, small enterprises, middle-sized cities)	- Ownership of people (communities) over public services (housing cooperatives)	processes amongst citizens and policy-makers	of engagement - User (and market) oriented reform of administration	"participation management" in public administration - More transversal administrative coordination
Goals	- Strengthen representative democracy and enhance administrative efficiency - Increase direct citizen participation - Creation of new forms of democratic citizenship - Fight against neo-liberal dominance - More social justice: "inversion of priorities"	-Raise interest for public issues, -Satisfy needs of disadvantaged groups of actors -More redistributive justice -Ameliorate functioning of representative democracy through fostering of citizen participation	- growing esteem of "private" values in political sphere (affection, local roots, love, etc.) - increased dialogue and communication between state officials and citizens and amongst citizens - "creation of networks of proximity solidarity"	- Political (political education, and active exercise of citizenship, "revitalisation of politics") - Administrative (greater flexibility and responsibility of public administrations) - Social nature (a more "cohesive" and "egalitarian society"; less "anti-social behaviour")	- Empower local communities - Community development - Strengthen the democratic order - Tackle poverty - Provision of services in relation to local needs	- primarily citizen-oriented form of municipal politics - a democratic style of partnership between citizens and policy-makers - towards a horizontal governance - more solidarity between citizens - efficiency and effectiveness gains for councils	- Democratisation of municipal politics - More acceptability for local decisions - More solidarity between citizens - Efficiency gains through cost-reductions for council - Better political outcomes (effectiveness-games)
Key features of parti-cipatory process	- Existence of procedural rules - Overall fluidity of process - Self-regulation through participants - Broad bottom-up participation - Open accessibility, 'imperative mandate' for citizens' representatives	-Division of power -Broad and inclusive participation (especially of lower income groups) -Existence of clear rules; 'fluid' participatory instruments	- top-down orientation (no procedural autonomy for citizens) - no transfer of decision powers - open access to all citizens	- ownership of certain local institutions - accountability of elected representatives - to go beyond mere consultation - Devolution of power to local level, but maintenance of overall steering role of state	- Provide space of common discussion and decision for citizens - External actors learn together with citizens - Accountability of policy-makers (ideally: Porto Alegre-style model with an annual cycle, a budget council, etc.)	- integration of direct democracy as means to ameliorate the functioning of representative democracy - a cooperation between policy makers and citizens with "quasi equal rights"	- Central steering competences for policy-makers - no transfer of decision powers (except transfer of assets) - open access to all citizens at the local level

246

The analysis of differences and similarities between the different frames of citizen participation could be pushed much further. Moreover, each frame could be analysed in greater depth, for instance through the consideration of more texts (policy documents, interviews or academic publications). For the present purpose, however, this general overview shall be sufficient. It develops and adds interesting comparative insights into the field of normative and ideological horizons of citizen participation that exist in France, Germany, and Great Britain today. The comparison of frames of citizen participation across different countries constitutes a new research agenda. Some scholars (Sintomer, Herzberg, and Röcke 2008b; Herzberg 2008) have so far engaged a comparative discussion. As far as I know, however, most existing studies deal with frames or similar concepts in single countries (e.g. Banner 1999; Jann 2002; Le Bart, Lefebvre 2005; Levitas 2000). There is a need of further systematic and comparative exploration of this interesting dimension of current democratic developments, as well as of its complex connections between ideas and the 'real world'. In this study, I focused on the role of frames in the diffusion and introduction of new policy instruments, but many other thematic areas could be explored. One could investigate, for example, the role of frames in the introduction of new laws (e.g. 'law on participatory democracy' introduced be region of Toscany in 2007). A different research programme would consist of comparing the analysis of contemporary frames with historic sources, for instance the debates about citizen participation that took place in the 1960s and '70s or the discussion around workers' or other grassroots movements in the 19th century.

III. Three cases of participatory budgeting – a comparison

The frames just presented do affect the implementation of participatory budgeting institutions, but not in a simple and straightforward manner and not to the same degree in all cases. Moreover, it is important to distinguish between those cases where the procedure is implemented with clear reference to a frame of citizen participation (Poitou-Charentes, Berlin Lichtenberg) and those where no such official policy frame exists, but where the involved actors design the procedure 'only' with regard to pragmatic goals of action (Salford). In all

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[4] Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke (2008) have developed ideal-type models of participation, which include also ideational aspects. Herzberg (2008) has compared different *Leitbilder* of participation using the criteria developed by Jann (2002) (see footnote 15 in introduction).

cases, other factors do also influence the procedural invention and implementation of participatory budgeting, and in all cases the initial ideas and goals are not necessarily mirrored in the policy instrument, because they have to be adopted to the institutional setting and encountered critique.

1) The implementation of participatory budgeting: intervening factors and dynamics

The adoption of a participatory budgeting procedure to a new host culture involves three steps: the idea must be 'imported', the procedural design needs to be created, and finally the process has to be implemented. The role of frames of citizen participation is most relevant for the first two steps, the idea importation and process invention.

Who imports (and diffuses) a process like participatory budgeting and why? All involved actors I interviewed in the framework of this study pursued the overall aim of increasing the role of citizens in the process of decision-making. At the same time, the specific frames, i.e. goals and ideological perspectives on citizen participation differed a lot, as well as the personal and professional backgrounds. I talked, amongst others, to former '68-activists who passed from 'revolution' to 'reform'. I interviewed local community and church-related activists. I talked to people with a long-standing professional (and political) interest and engagement for citizen participation and those who developed the interest for local institutionalised citizen participation after a regime-change. This presentation of some of the key actors provided insights to possible goals and perspectives, for which actors decide to diffuse or to implement a participatory budgeting process (e.g. to tackle poverty; involve disadvantaged groups of the population; create a user-oriented administration and increase the dialogue between citizens and policy-makers; engage processes of local capacity building and of empowerment; etc.). This presentation of the 'PB actors' constituted an additional, original perspective on some features of the respective national contexts through the lense of individual careers and developments.

Moreover, the question of the 'import' is related to the type of diffusion. I distinguished between direct, mediated and indirect diffusion. In all cases, the diffusion can involve the process of PB, the frame of citizen participation or both. In Salford and Berlin, the civil society activists, who advocated for PB, did *not* justify their project with the frame of citizen

participation related to the Porto Alegre model, participatory democracy. Pragmatic and strategic reasons probably account for this choice, i.e. the aim to appear as 'realistic' as possible. In Poitou-Charentes, where the idea and process of PB was introduced through a direct diffusion process (Royal and her special adviser both travelled to Porto Alegre), Royal presented this new process in relation to participatory democracy. In this case, the concept functioned as an overall policy label to a new political programme, as well as a justification for this new approach.

The French case study represents a sort of paradigmatic example with regard to the relation of frames of citizen participation and participatory budgeting process. The process reflects an attempt to 'put into practice' a new frame of citizen participation, participatory democracy, which was placed on the political agenda by the regional President. The process organisers had quite a clear idea of the basic political principles, expressed by the participatory democracy frame of Bouchet-Petersen, and adapted these ideas to the local context in reaction to the encountered opposition, with regard to their field of competences and other (strategic, political, pragmatic) considerations in a process of ideational, practical and strategic *bricolage*. In this case, the existence of the participatory democracy frame, novel in the French political context, clearly influenced the set up of a procedure that conveys to participants the right to take decisions concerning considerable amounts of money. A new frame of citizen participation does, of course, not automatically provoke an augmentation of the influence of citizens. As I showed in the chapter on the Porto Alegre model, the new conservative government has introduced a new concept or frame, "Local Solidarity Governance" (Fedozzi 2009), which in the future might be linked to a reduction of the influence and power of participants.

The French case study not only underlines the possible role of a new frame of citizen participation for the designing of a new institution, but also the importance of other intervening factors that influence the process of procedural *bricolage*. These are, most notably, the domain of competence (high schools); the support or opposition encountered by administrative and political personnel; and the the role of existing and new models of participation (the organisers wanted to go beyond the existing canon of participatory instruments and to introduce a Porto Alegre-like process). These factors, and most likely others, influence the process of institutional design, which is always a mixture of pragmatic,

political strategic and normative considerations carried out within a specific political and institutional context.[5]

With regard to the process implementation, the comparison of three cases has highlighted the role of partly similar/partly different factors. These are the political will to introduce a new procedure and to support it against administrative and political opposition; administrative support for developing and implementing this procedure; financial means to publicise and organise the procedure; and the type of diffusion. The latter factor is not as 'strong' as the previous ones, most notably the political and administrative support. The importance of "strong political buy-in" has also been underlined in a recent research about PB in Great Britain published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (2009: 16).[6] However, a direct diffusion process reduces the risk of the situation being blocked because of opposed perspectives about the scope of citizen participation (the case of Salford). A similar situation can also occur in case of a lacking administrative support, which might impede the process implementation.

With regard to these factors, the Salford case lies on the opposite side to the French example. There was no official frame of citizen participation guiding the process implementation of PB, but the small organising team pursued the overall aim of developing a more democratic process than the existing system of community participation. No leading political actor supported the initiative and there were no additional funds for its organisation. The idea of initiating a PB process was put on the political agenda by a local non-government organisation inspired by the Porto Alegre process, but their perspectives appeared too radical for local officers and politicians. The procedure that has eventually been implemented represents a form of procedural assimilation of the Porto Alegre model to the institutional context. It witnesses a certain opening and democratisation of the participatory instruments that exist, but remains within the borders of the existing system of a micro-local procedure that is in no way linked to the overall priorities of the council or its administrative structure or *référentiel*.

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[5] The situation is different in cases of a trademarked participation instrument that involves a fix set of procedures (for instance deliberative polls, see chapter 2).

[6] Moreover, the report underlines the following criteria of success: openness to all citizens in procedural designing, issues of high importance at stake and a supportive national framework (CLG 2009: 16).

The situation in Berlin Lichtenberg constitutes an intermediate case. The strong, political aim of creating a new, more far-reaching PB process marks the beginning of this process. The district mayor had the support of two leading servants in the administration in order to implement the new procedure, as well as an additional funding from the city government. The participatory budgeting process was introduced with reference to a new frame of citizen participation, the citizens' commune, but this frame did not directly influence the process of procedural designing. The process of PB and the frame of citizen participation were elaborated separately and by different actors. Despite a 'participationist' definition of the citizens' commune and the goal of the organisers to go beyond the existing practice of PB in Germany, the process represents today a form of user-oriented administration rather than a far-reaching participatory process. It enlarges the scope of influence of citizens with regard to the examples of the 'first generation' PBs in Germany (related to the New Public Management agenda), but does not modify the division of labour between elected representatives and citizens.

Once the procedure is implemented, its development depends most importantly on two factors: the way it is supported (or not) by the citizens, as well as by changing political constellations (new actors come to power) or new goals and priorities (or frames) of the initiating team. Moreover, it can develop an important dynamic of its own and lead to unexpected consequences. Here, again, the French case constitutes a good example, because the PB process provoked important results on the regional administration, but showed less impressive results as to the political goas, which had motivated the implementation of this new participatory institution.

Is there any specific role of the local and national institutional and political context in the process implementation, or do the highlighted factors intervene in the same way in different national contexts? For instance, would the implementation of a participatory budget procedure in high schools take a different shape in a German or British location, because high schools are managed in a different manner? Would a project like in Lichtenberg follow a different path of development in France, because the municipal political systems differ? The type of analysis carried out here does not allow me to put forward a systematic answer to these questions. This would require the comparison of three cases of PB at the same territorial level in order to single out the respective importance of the intervening institutional factors, for instance the type of management of high schools (funding, internal functioning, type of

management, etc.) or the type of the local political system and of local government funding. Are factors like 'political will' and 'administrative support' more important, equally important, or less important than the type of state organisation or of local management structures? Or does the success of an institutionalised participation project depend still on other factors, for instance the degree of organisation of local civil society? These questions merit a more detailed analysis in future research projects, which could take the factors singled out here as a starting point of the analysis. In this project, I considered the national context mainly in relation to frames of citizen participation, i.e. their creation and diffusion, which in turn influences local processes of institutional design and creation. At this level, too, one could focus more on the 'national' differences and similarities of frames by the selection of the same frame in different countries. Do there exist, for instance, 'national' interpretations of 'participatory democracy' in France, Italy, and Spain – all countries where it constitutes (or has constituted) the master frame of citizen participation?

2) Participatory budgeting from the perspective of institutional change

In chapters 8 to 10, I discussed the participatory budget institutions not only with regard to the dynamics of implementation or the degree of innovation (next section), but also in relation to the question of their effects on the institutional structures. Are participatory budget institutions linked to, part of, or do they even provoke processes of institutional change? In the empirical chapters, this question was analysed with regard to the concept of *référentiel*. I now adopt a broader perspective by introducing different models of institutional change. It would reach far beyond the scope of the present study to review the whole literature about institutional change; instead, I focus on the classification elaborated by Wolfgang Streeck and Kathleen Thelen (2005). The following criteria are used to adapt their model to the case of participatory budgeting: existence of a frame (importation of new frame or re-definition of an existing one); type of actors involved ('new' or 'old'); relation between new and old institutional setting (co-existence, replacement,…); effects on institutional setting (e.g. on administrative organisation); process of change (abrupt, incremental). Moreover, I adapt these models in terms of a *process* of change rather than its result as in the case of Streeck and Thelen.

The five types of institutional change developed by the authors are conversion (existing institutions are adapted to serve new goals or to fit the interests of new actors), drift (change

through lack of active maintenance of existing institutional setting), exhaustion (institutional breakdown), displacement and layering. The last two models are now discussed in relation to the three processes of PB analysed in chapters 8 to 10.

Table 15: Participatory budgeting and forms of institutional change

	'Strong' displacement	'Weak' displacement	Layering
Frame	New frame or redefinition of existing one	New frame or redefinition of existing one	No official frame
Actors ('new'; 'old')	'New' actors	'New' actors	'Old' actors
Relation to existing institutional setting	Replacement	Co-existence	Co-existence
Effects on institutional setting	Endogenous and strong	Important effects, but part of overall reform	Marginal
Process of change	Abrupt	Incremental	Incremental (if at all)
Example	'High school participatory budget'	Berlin Lichtenberg PB	Claremont / Weaste & Seedly PB

The 'High school participatory budget' in Poitou-Charentes and the Berlin Lichtenberg process can be interpreted as cases of displacement. Displacement means that an existing institution is progressively replaced by a new one. In the literature on Institutionalism, this kind of change is usually related to whole systems; they change when "new models emerge and diffuse which call into question existing, previously taken-for-granted organisational forms and practices" (Streeck, Thelen 2005: 19). Relating displacement to a participatory budgeting process implies necessarily a more restricted perspective: not on whole systems, but on single processes or institutions within a system. Change through displacement can occur either endogenously, "through the rediscovery or activation of previously suppressed or suspended possibilities", or through "invasion" (ibid: 21). With regard to PB, the "metaphorical" form of invasion is more relevant than the "literal" one; it "involves the importation and then cultivation by local actors of 'foreign' institutions and practices" (ibid).[7] This introduction of foreign processes usually leads to the co-existence of institutional

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[7] The literal version refers to those processes, where indigenous institutions and practices are supplanted by foreign ones, presumably by those of a victor or occupying power.

arrangements, even in cases of displacement that lead to a new "dominant logic of action" (ibid: 20).

Change through displacement typically occurs through political factors (a change in the balance of power) rather than cognitive or normative ones (ibid: 19). The participatory budget procedures analysed here, however, at least the two French and German cases, highlight the importance of normative and cognitive factors, i.e. the importation of new normative frameworks of public policy. I do not think that these frames are more important than political factors. I underlined above the central role of political actors as carriers of new ideas as well as of the importance of political and administrative support. Moreover, I argue that change through displacement usually involves the entrance of new actors on the political scene, typically a newly elected politician (my position therefore includes political factors). Nonetheless, in certain cases frames do play a decisive role, especially when they are used to justify the introduction of new policy instruments. Unless a significant number of civil servants and/or politicians do not share a new frame, the produced effect will probably remain limited in the medium- and long-term. If, however, it is supported not only by the limited group of initiators, but is increasingly shared by other policy-makers (or citizens) and deliberately 'put' into 'practice' through an adaptation to the institutional setting, then the role of frames with regard to the importation of new policy instruments (and eventually even the modification of the institutional structure) is central.

I distinguish between 'strong' and 'weak' displacement. Weak displacement might sound somewhat paradoxical, but it is related to the fact that the models of institutional change are considered as processes rather than a result. Weak displacement occurs in form of a co-existence of the new institution and the previous institutional setting. In this variant, it is not the new institution itself that produces far-reaching effects, but it is part of a broader reform movement, which in a more incremental way leads to a modification of the existing institutional setting (Lichtenberg). Strong displacement occurs through the presence of the new institution: the occurring change is a direct result of the new institution. Moreover, it leads to a quite abrupt replacement of the former institutional practice (Poitou-Charentes).

The participatory budget process in Claremont / Weaste & Seedley in the city of Salford can be presented as a potential or preliminary form of layering. Layering refers to those processes of change where new institutions and practices are introduced "mainly at the margins", in

form of "minor additions and repairs" (ibid: 24). In the model of Streeck and Thelen, these marginal modifications provoke deep transformations of existing institutional settings – an analysis which cannot be made (yet) with regard to the Salford process because of its recent origin. Moreover, I argue that it is rather improbable that this procedure will produce a broad transformation of existing institutional and power relations, unless it does encounter a clearer political support. Nevertheless, the model of layering points to the type or process of introduction of participatory budgeting as new institution. This happens in the form of a new layer, added to the existing institutional setting, probably in the framework of a more experimental approach. In the following, the 'new' process functions within the existing institutional framework. I would argue furthermore that change through layering does usually not involve new actors and no new frame of reference. Unlike displacement, the effects on the institutional arrangements (e.g. administrative reorganisation) are, at least in the beginning, marginal.

3) Three cases of participatory budgeting – innovative procedures?

The detailed investigation of three participatory budget institutions, as well as an analysis of a broader set of examples on the basis of secondary literature and the results of the European comparative project on PB, has provided a mixed picture with regard to the degree of innovation. The criteria for assessing this dimension were the degree of power of citizens in the process (impact on 'rules of the game' and the practical management of the process; decision-making competence or consultation), the level of the process (micro-local or broader), the use of specific mechanisms of involvement (door-to-door mobilisation, random selection, etc.), and the scope of influence of participant (large or restricted). These criteria differ partly from those that are important for practitioners or organisers of a participatory budgeting process. For them, the quantity of participation appears often (in all three cases studied here) as the main 'symbol of success' of their procedure. This can have consequences like in Salford, where the organisers directed all their energies on the mobilisation of people ('input legitimacy') and disregarded the deliberative dimension of the process ('procedural legitimacy'). In Berlin Lichtenberg, however (where the organisers dispose of more financial and institutional support), the aim to go beyond the participation of the 'usual suspects' led to a broad mobilisation campaign involving new methods, without reducing the importance of a common deliberation process (that, however, is quite limited).

The following table brings together the single tables presented at the end of every single case chapter.

Table 16: Political/procedural innovation of three cases of PB

	Impact on rules and management	Decision-making	Level of participation	Measures for increasing participation	Scope of influence
'High school PB'	Limited	Yes	Micro-level (single high schools)	Limited	Considerable: high school, regional policy
PB in Claremont / Weaste & Seedley	No	Yes	Micro-level (single city area)	Limited	Very limited: one area
PB in Lichtenberg	Medium: role in invention; steering role	No	City-wide and in neighbourhoods	Considerable	Medium: growing number of domains

The three processes differ with regard to the respective criteria. The 'High school PB' involves limited attempts to increase the actual participation (invitation send to all members of the educative community, internet), is situated at the micro-local level and provides participants with a limited impact on the rules. At the same time, participants have a real stake in the process, as they have de facto decision-making competences about quite considerable amounts of money (10% of the regional budget for education), as well as an indirect influence about the regional education policy. The Lichtenberg procedure, in turn, involves citizens in the whole process of budget allocation, with regard to a broad range of services and by using a range of different measures of involvement (random selection, mobilisation of disadvantaged groups, etc.). However, citizens only have a consultative voice, as politicians alone judge the legitimacy and feasibility of proposals made by citizens. The Salford procedure shares several characteristics with the French process (direct decision-competence at the micro-local level; limited measures for increasing participation), but differs from it in two respects: participants have no influence at all on the procedural design, and the scope of influence is very limited.

One can also distinguishe more clearly between the political degree of innovation (power) and its procedural sophistication and organise the table in a way that the 'power of citizens'

constitutes one variable and the 'procedural format' the other one. As above, the aspect of power contains the impact on the final decision (consultation; decision-making competence) and the influence on the process rules and - management; the 'procedural format' involves the level of participation (micro-local; city-wide); the use of specific measures for increasing the participation (internet, door-to-door mobilisation, etc.); and the scope of influence (broad or small range of topics). With regard to the level of participation, the adjective 'high' used in the table means a city-wide process (or a process that goes beyond the micro-local level); in relation to the scope of influence it is related to a broad (not limited) range of topics. In order to establish a broader picture, I also integrated the Porto Alegre model and traditional forms of citizen participation like neighbourhood councils.

Table 17: Power of citizens and procedural shape of participatory process

		Degree of political innovation / Power of citizens (impact on decision; influence on rules and management)	
		High	Low
Degree of procedural innovation - Level of participation - Measures for increasing participation - Scope of influence	High	Porto Alegre Poitou-Charentes	Lichtenberg
	Low	Sal-	ford Traditional processes of citizen participation

The Porto Alegre procedure is situated at the intersection of the two 'high' classifications: it involves a de facto impact on decisions; a broad influence of participants on the rules; a procedure that involves the neighbourhood and city-wide level and a broad scope of influence. It does not involve specific mobilisation techniques, but the mixed origin (bottom-up and top-down) and the high degree of organisation of the civil society in Porto Alege have so far assured a level of participation, which largely exceeds traditional participatory instruments. In the opposite position lie traditional processes of citizen participation, like, for instance, a neighbourhood assembly. They usually imply a low degree of power for participants (consultative voice; no or limited impact on rules), as well as a low degree of

procedural sophistication (micro-local level; no specific measures of involvement; limited scope of influence).

The Salford PB process comes closest to the traditional models of participation. Participants have no stake on the procedural rules. Furthermore, it relies on a low degree of political innovation. However, participants can directly decide upon a devolved sum of money, which is the reason why the case is situated in an intermediate position between 'high' and 'low'. The 'High school PB' is also situated in an 'in-between' position. With regard to the degree of procedural innovation, it oscillates between a broad scope of influence and a micro-local process that does not rely on any specific means of involvement. In terms of power or political innovation, it lies in the 'high' box, close to the upper right area. Participants have direct and indirect decision powers; their involvement in the procedural designing is still limited, but the organisers have broadened the possibilities of influence for participants. The Lichtenberg case lies in the block at the upper right, close to the upper left domain. Participants have no decision-making powers. At the same time, citizens have been involved in the process development and a committee involving representatives of the organised local civil society is continuously evaluating the procedure. In relation to the procedural degree of innovation, the process is clearly situated in the upper part of the table: it involves micro-local and district-wide meetings; the use of various special mechanisms of involvement, as well as a relatively broad (and increasing) scope of influence.

What does this analysis tell us with regard to the broader question of the role of top-down involvement strategies on the democratisation of democracy? When do participatory budgets really matter and influence political decisions and the administrative/political system? The English case shows the less convining results in this respect. Due to the limited political and financial support, the process is organised on a small-scale basis at the margins of the political system with no broader impact on the decisions of the council or even the overall orientation and priorities of Community Committees. It might have positive impacts on the participants, who can take decisions about public funds, but it might also increase the degree of cynism about the polical system if core decisions continue to be made by a closed circle of experts. This example shows that the mere transfer of decision-making competences about limited sums without any further changes does not necessarily lead to a broader process of democratisation. At the same time, the spending of even a small fund enable citizens to see the immediate result of their activism and potentially creates a process through which citizens

become interested in the political system. So far, however, the results of institutionalised participatory practices on the politicisation of a broad range of ordinary citizens seem to be quite limited, in any case much more limited than the (decreasing) role played by political parties. New forms of involvement like participatory budgeting constitute, nevertheless, one element of democratic involvement next to political parties and social movements. They constitute usually a less hierarchical space than most of political parties, but have at the same time closer links to the institutional system than social movements. From this perspective, a core challenge of top-down participatory measures is to reach beyond the small circle of already active citizens, to provide a high quality discussion sphere that integrates a broad range of perspectives and to use the participation of citizens in order to re-orient the broader administrative and political system.[8] With regard to the administrative dimension, the results in the German and French case are quite convincing (strong and weak displacement). The French case has moreover initiated a process of democratisation within high schools (at least in some institutions), but its broader political impact depends crucially on the support through regional politicians, as well as on the interest and support from the side of the high school community. The same observation relates to the German example. It assumes more clearly the goal of a participatory user-administration in form of the citizens' commune frame (instead of that of a participatory democracy), but also in this case the future role and influence of the process will probably depend on the degree of political support and activism from within the population and the group of elected representatives.

After this evaluation in more political and normative terms, I continue the analysis in linking the previous analysis about the degree of political and procedural innovation to the frames of citizen participation presented in the course of this work. All frames contain a certain description of the type of participatory instruments, even though not every frame might involve all elements discussed here. As the following table shows, there is a certain degree of overlap between the participatory instruments and the related frames of citizen participation.

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[8] One could say, respectively, that the core challenge of political parties is to create and provide political personnel (politicians) as well as to set the terms of public debates, which is also a core function of social movements.

Table 18: Procedural features of PB and frames of citizen participation

		Power of citizens (impact on decision; influence on rules)	
		High	Low
Innovative procedural format - Level of participation - Measures for increasing participation - Scope of influence	High	'Participatory Democracy' in Porto Alegre 'Participatory Democracy' by Bouchet-P.	'Citizens' commune' by G. Banner 'Citizens' commune' by Bogumil et al.
	Low	'Community' by H. Blears	'Proximity' by J.-P. Raffarin

Like in the last table, the participatory democracy frame from Porto Alegre is situated in the upper left box. It aims at a new division of powers between citizens and elected representatives and a great deal of popular control on the whole procedure. Moreover, it discusses citizen participation in terms of procedures that go beyond the micro-local level and have a broad scope of influence. At the opposite end lies the proximity frame of Jean-Pierre Raffarin. It does not envision the transfer of decision-making competences to citizens, nor a great deal of procedural autonomy for them. It does not explicitly mention the procedural aspects discussed here, but the overall approach to the topic of citizen participation does rather point to the 'lower' side of it. The participatory democracy frame of Bouchet-Petersen is situated in the 'high' classification of procedural innovation: it aims at a level of participation beyond the micro-local level and a broad scope of influence for citizens. Although we have seen that the practice of the 'High school PB' does not go beyond the micro-local level of single high schools, Bouchet-Petersen always underlines that a two-stage participation process would represent an ideal procedure.[9] The frame is situated in the upper left box, because it aims at a transfer of decision-making competences to citizens. In contrast to the Porto Alegre frame, however, it does not involve a strong emphasis on the co-determination of the procedural rules through participants or even the self-management of the process.

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[9] See chapter 8. As I have shown, this perspective has succumbed to the changed strategic considerations of Bouchet-Petersen and Royal in the framework of the Presidential election campaign of 2007.

The community frame of Hazel Blears is placed in the lower box on the left side: like the two frames of participatory democracy it aims at a transfer of decision-making competences to ordinary citizens. However, she locates the participatory instrument at the micro-local level and with regard to specific themes and does not envision participatory procedures with a broader scope of influence or level of participation. The two frames of the citizens' commune are situated on the right side of the table and in the medium-upper half of it. All definitions share an emphasis on a consultative process of citizen participation, although Banner (as well as the 'Left' in Lichtenberg) also supports the introduction of direct democratic means of participation. Moreover, Banner sustains the idea of the implementation of a city-wide participatory budget (and other participatory) procedures that strengthen the position of citizens in the process of decision-making. The perspective of Bogumil et.al., by contrast, is more closely related to micro-local devices of participation, where officers and elected representatives remain the clear and unique *maîtres d'oeuvre*.

One aspect that has not yet been discussed is the link between participatory processes and the existing institutional-political structure of representative democracy, because it is not linked to the question of innovation in a clear-cut manner. Is the participatory instrument integrated in the political structure without modifying its basic rules, does it modify these rules or even abolish them? None of the processes (and frames) discussed here, the Porto Alegre model included, aims at an overthrow of the existing political order. The goal of the organisers is, instead, to articulate the participatory processes with the existing framework and thereby to increase its legitimacy. The concrete perspectives vary a great deal. Some aim at a modification of the traditional division of labour between representatives and citizens, others simply aim to broaden the possibilities of citizen participation without changing the monopole of decision of politicians. Raffarin's proximity frame and the perspective of the citizens' commune by Bogumil et. al. (2003) clearly belong to the second group, whereas the two variants of the participatory democracy frame discussed here are part of the first group.

Both Blear's community frame and Banner's citizens' commune frame are situated in between these two poles. Banner's definition of the citizens' commune depends largely on the good will of officers and elected representatives to cooperative with citizens and to cooperate also with critical citizens. Banner (1999) discusses some structural reforms (electoral modes, party structures, etc.). With regard to consultative procedures of citizen participation, however, he does not provide clear answers of how to reach cooperation between policy

makers and citizens based on "quasi-equal rights" (ibid). How far should the influence of citizens be on decisions about the municipal budget? Should they also have a say with regard to other decisions, for instance the privatisation of public services?

Blears' community frame contains a devolution of power of clearly identified funds or organisational duties. This implies a modification of the traditional system of representative democracy, because citizens decide about funds or manage assets, which in the traditional system is done by officers and politicians. However, it does not couple this devolution of power with a modification of the 'remaining', major part of service delivery and decision-making process. For Hazel Blears, this kind of power devolution leads to a democratisation of the current system. One could also argue, though, that this approach leads to a system of 'governance' where citizens are involved only in the spending of very limited amounts of money, whereas business firms, public-private partnerships and state-led organisation are responsible for deciding about the largest part of the cake. Are participatory devices nothing more than a micro-local 'playground' in order to prevent citizens from questioning the overall division of power and allocation of funds?

The last scenario is an example that underlines that 'citizen participation' is not necessarily equivalent to 'democracy'. Citizens can participate in a variety of institutional settings and contexts, even in autocratic or dictatorial regimes (acclamation of ruling elite). Some institutionalised participatory processes have the vocation to strengthen or reinvigorate the democratic order and might reach this goal to a certain extent; others constitute simply a management tool or are mainly implemented in order to provide legitimacy to the ruling elite; a third group aims at a democratisation of practices, but produces mainly other, unexpected results. From this perspective, it is noteworthy that the German and French case had quite considerable impacts on the administrative apparatus, but showed more ambiguous results in relation to the initial political goals. Is it at all possible to create artificially a substantial interest in political matters amongst the citizenry? What are conditions that allow this to happen? Could it be that despite the political focus of many organisers, PB processes in Europe might contriubute above all to the implementation of a user-oriented administration rather than a 'democratisation of democracy' or an 'inversion of priorities'? The results of the present empirical study point into this direction and thereby tend to confirm a hypothesis developed with regard to a broader set of European examples (Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke 2008b).

Citizen participation is on the political agenda today – but its procedural forms, ideological roots and concrete outcomes differ greatly. There is no automatic link between citizen participation and democracy, but the former is a necessary condition for the latter to occur. What is the role of citizen participation in democratic societies today? Different ideological and normative perspectives provide distinct answers to this question, and various participatory practices provide a concrete field of experimentation in this regard. These two factors mutually influence, but not determine each other. This is why democratic innovation does not only pass through new ideas, but ideas play an important, sometimes crucial role for the imagination and the implementation of alternative ways of doing politics. 'Ideas matter', but they are not directly translated into actions and institutions; their materialisation is filtered by the (local, national) political context and the pragmatic, normative, and strategic considerations of individual actors.

The detailed presentation of three cases of participatory budgeting, as well as of more general trends and developments in the domain of citizen participation in France, Germany, and Great Britain, has painted a complex picture of the possibilities and potential drawbacks, as well as the results of institutionalised participatory practices today. They can have important effects – but not necessarily those the organisers aimed at. They might change the organisational structure of the organising body (public administration), or be carried out at the margins of the political-administrative system without producing (yet) any tangible outcomes for the participants or the institutional framework. When they *do have* a direct or indirect impact, do participatory budgets or other institutionalised forms of citizen participation lead to a *change* of the existing order or rather to its *stabilisation*? Might this stabilisation only be possible through a change of the existing institutional framework? These questions merit further exploration because they point to the core of the today *malaise* in Western representative democracies, as well as to possibilities to overcome it through the invention of new democratic practices and ideas.

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Appendix: List of interviews

1) Poitou-Charentes/ France

Name	Function	Date
1) Sophie Bouchet-Petersen	Special Advisor Regional President	12.2.2008
2) Marc Fischer	Director of regional High School Department	3.10.2006; 7.2.2008
3) Ali Bettayeb	Director of Service 'High school PB'	3.10.2006
4) Marion Ben-Hammo	Programme Coordinator Participatory Democracy	15.2.2007
5) Florence Eon	Service 'High school PB'	20.2.2007
6) Elodie Descos	Service 'High school PB'	20.2.2007
7) Raphael Marre	Service 'High school PB'	20.2.2007
8) François Obrecht	Previous Director of regional Department for Construction works in high schools	28.2.2007
9) Jean-Claude Genovesio	Service Programmation and equipment	14.2.2007
10) Jean-Luis Faillie	Service Constructions	22.2.2007
11) Patrick Audoux	Technician	16.2.2007
12) Eric Faure	Technician	20.2.2007
13) Jean-Claude Mathieu	Technician	19.2.2007
14) M. STUPAR	Politician (Greens)	16.2.2007
15) Mme BONNEFOIS	Politician (PS)	9.2.2007
16) M. GRELLIER	Politician (PS)	16.2.2007
17-20) 4 pupils	Pupil	14.2.2007
21-22) 2 pupils	Pupil	16.2.2007
23-27) 5 pupils	Pupil	21.2.2007
28) Parent	Parent	22.2.2007
29-30) Teacher	Teacher	14.3.3007

2) Salford/ Great Britain

Name	Function	Date
1) Jez Hall	PB Unit	28.6.2004; 18.9.2007 (and informal discussions)
2) Kezia Lavan	PB Unit	12.6.2007
3) Mick Walbank	Neighbourhood Manager Salford	18.9.2008; 27.2.2009
4) Anne Godding	Neighbourhood Manager Salford	18.9.2008
5) Diana Martin	Neighbourh Management Coordinator Salford	15.9.2008
6) Key Fairhust	Community Development Worker Salford	18.9.2008
7) Lasley Bates	Administrative Officer Salford	18.9.2008
8) John Merry	Leader of the Council Salford (Labour)	30.9.2008
9) Bill Hinds	Former Leader of the Council Salford (Labour)	7.12.2004
10) Derek Antrobus	Councillor, Lead member for Planning	21.11.2008
11) Steve Kingston	Journalist Salford	17.9.2008
12) Davy Jones	Consultant	9.11.2007
13) Tricia Zipfel	Former senior community advisor to the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit	10.12.2007; 18.10. 2008
14) Elke Löffler	Governance International	20.11.2007
15) Mick Norris	Local Government Association	19.9.2008
16) Bob Macey	Home Office	22.9.2008
17) Richard Watkins	Department Communities and Local Government	22.9.2008
18) Hilary Wainwright	Editor of Red Pepper (informal discussions)	15.-17.9.2008
19) Ursula Sossalla-Iredale	Neighbourhood Manager Salford	7.12.2004

3) Berlin/ Germany

Name	Function	Date
1) Christina Emmrich	Mayor of Berlin Lichtenberg	9.4.2007; 6.12.2007
2) Johannes Middendorf,	Director of personal- and finance management in Lichtenberg	13.12.2007
3) Ernst-Ullrich Reich	Director of Steering service in Lichtenber	12.12.2007
4) Rolf-Peter Zotl	'Left' Party MP	12.3.2008
5) Heino Gröf	Federal Institute for Political Education	14.2.2008, 6.10.2008
6) Anselm Weidner	Journalist	15.4.2008; 10.10.2008
7) Petra Brangsch	Research Assistant of 'Left' MP K. Kunert	5.1.2008; 5.10.2008
8) Lutz Brangsch	Rosa Luxemburg Foundation	5.1.2008
9) Andreas Geisel	District MP Lichtenberg (Social Democrat)	7.12.2007
10) Carsten Herzberg	Researcher about PB	27.2.2007
11) Oliver Haubner	Bertelsmann Foundation	11.9.2008
12) Gerhard Banner	Former Professor for Public Administration; former Director of KGSt	26.2.2009